

# Bird Observer

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VOLUME 38, NUMBER 2

APRIL 2010



# HOT BIRDS

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This **Townsend's Solitaire** (left) was a great yard bird for Peter Bono in Yarmouthport on January 12, 2010. Photograph © Peter R. Bono.

On January 14, Ivan Ace and Ed Yargeau found an adult **Ivory Gull** (right) at Race Point, Provincetown. The next day, Blair Nikula took this stunning photograph (© Blair Nikula).



Mike Mastropasqua took this fabulous photograph of a male **Tufted Duck** (left) in Waltham on February 19.

Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll discovered a **Barnacle Goose** (right) on February 20, 2010, at Mill Pond in South Egremont, and Sheila took this photograph.



The **Sage Thrasher** (left) at the Salisbury Beach State Reservation had not been reported since January 16, but on March 27 Sandy Selesky and Jon Saperia rediscovered it, and Sandy took this great photograph.

# CONTENTS

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BIRDING THE ARNOLD ARBORETUM	<i>Bob Mayer</i>	69
FEATHERS AND FLARES	<i>Joey Mason</i>	79
FOURTEENTH REPORT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE	<i>Marshall J. Iliff and Matthew P. Garvey</i>	82
ABOUT BOOKS D.I.Y.	<i>Mark Lynch</i>	102
BIRD SIGHTINGS November/December 2009		108
ABOUT THE COVER: Barn Swallow	<i>William E. Davis, Jr.</i>	122
ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST: Julie Zickefoose		124
AT A GLANCE	<i>Wayne R. Petersen</i>	125



GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER BY GEORGE C. WEST

**Corrigendum:** In the February 2010 issue (Vol. 38, No. 1), on page 58, the downgrading of the Ipswich Sparrow to a subspecies should have referenced the 1983 AOU Check-list, not the 1957 edition.

For online indices and more, visit the *Bird Observer* website at  
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# Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal — to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds  
**VOL. 38, NO. 2 APRIL 2010**

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# Birding the Arnold Arboretum

*Bob Mayer*

Although the Arnold Arboretum at 265 acres is nearly half again the size of Mount Auburn Cemetery and has a more diverse habitat, it is not as well known as a birding area. Established in 1872 by Harvard University with a land grant from Benjamin Bussey and funds from James Arnold, the arboretum became a part of Fredrick Law Olmsted's



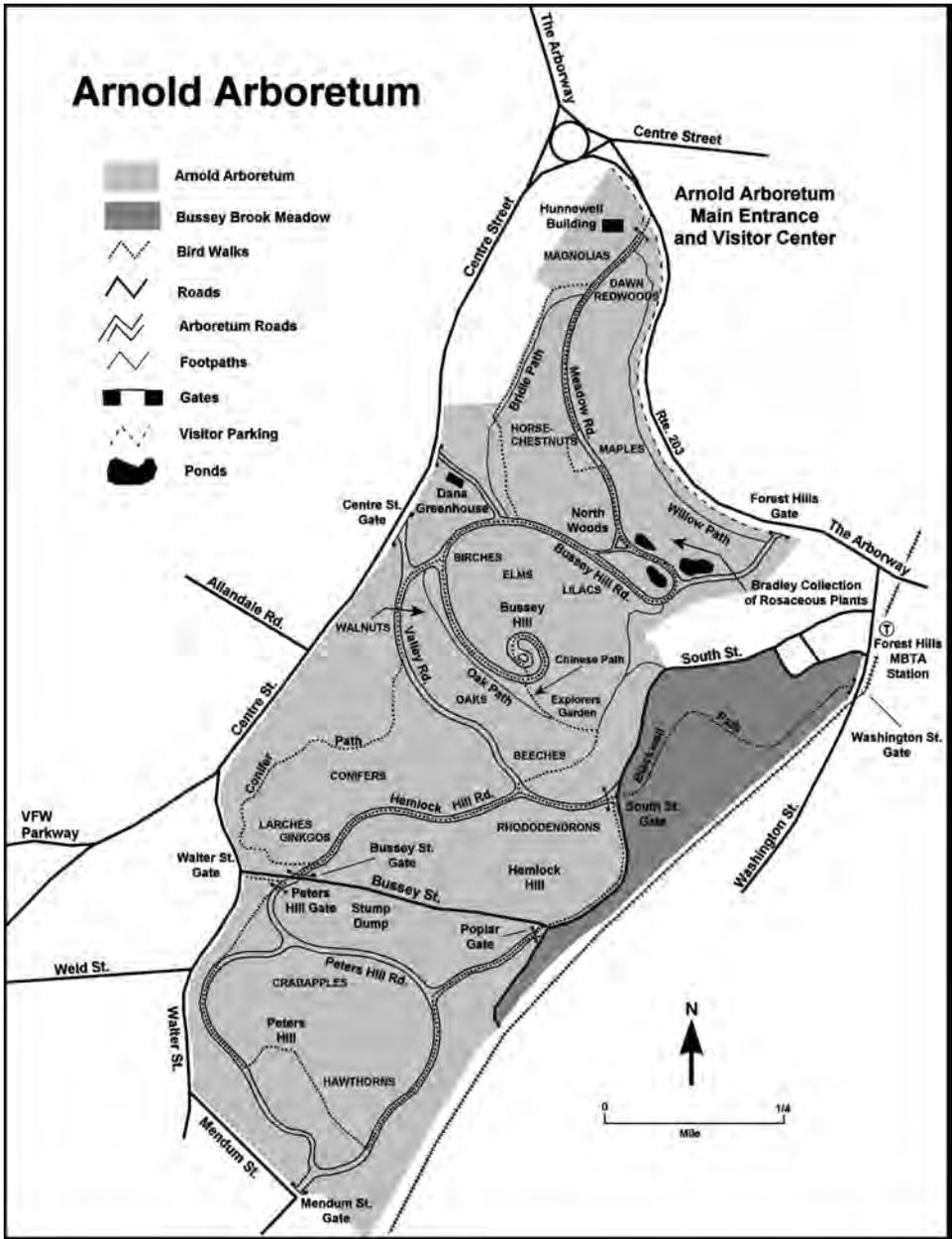
“Emerald Necklace” ten years later when it was transferred to the City of Boston and then leased back to Harvard for a thousand years. It has attracted serious birders since its inception. Over 40 percent of the arboretum's trees and shrubs are of Asian origin, but the local birds seem to have made peace with this exotic flora.

C. E. Faxon, who was Curator of the Arboretum from 1882 to 1893, recorded 50 species nesting in the arboretum and another 16 winter residents (Faxon 1895). One of the three ponds on the property is named in his honor. Miriam E. Dickey, a prominent mid-century science educator, led bird walks in the arboretum nearly every Saturday for almost four decades (1939-1976). She wrote the last *Bird Observer* site guide for the arboretum, published in 1976, and reported nearly 150 species seen during those years, 44 of which were confirmed as breeding birds (Dickey 1976). Richard Weaver, a former Assistant Curator on the horticultural staff, wrote another arboretum bird article. It includes data from Faxon and Dickey and documents his own sightings from that time (Weaver 1971).

The downloadable checklist “Birds of the Arnold Arboretum,” available on the arboretum website, lists 185 species, but only 148 have been seen in recent years. Of these, 54 were observed on nests or exhibiting breeding behavior (Mayer 2006). The species listed have changed over the years, but it is a tribute to the adaptability of the avian world that the total number of species has remained fairly constant.

As a part of the Boston park system, the arboretum is open every day from dawn to dusk, and there is no charge for admission. It is particularly well suited for exploration in the winter months since the roadways are usually plowed promptly, and birding from the road can be quite productive in inclement weather or for those who are not up to rougher terrain. The arboretum has recently instituted a new signage system, and there are user-friendly maps located at many locations on the property. Because of its size, an exploration of the entire landscape could take a full day and cover several miles.

This guide proposes two excursions: the first is a loop that begins at the main entrance just off the Arborway, continues through the conifer collection, and circles back over Bussey Hill. A second trip begins at the Walter Street Gate at the northeast corner of the arboretum and covers Peters Hill. It includes an optional walk through Bussey Brook Meadow and Marsh and returns to the point of origin via Hemlock Hill Road.



MAP BY DOROTHY GRAASKAMP

### The First Walk: Hunnewell-Bussey Hill Loop

Cars are not permitted in the arboretum without a special permit for special-needs individuals, but there is parking along the Arborway (Route 203) as well as on adjacent side streets. The arboretum website provides detailed directions for public

transportation and by car. As you enter the Arborway Gate the Hunnewell Building is on your right; it contains the only indoor public restroom on the grounds (closes at 4:00 p.m. daily and opens at 9:00 a.m. Monday–Friday, 10:00 a.m. Saturday, and noon Sunday), although portable restrooms are available at other locations during the spring and early summer.

Walking down Meadow Road, you pass a large meadow, almost a marshy wetland, on the left. It is a prime area for early spring arrivals. Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Grackles, and many sparrow species including Fox, Song, Swamp, Savannah, White-throated, and White-crowned can be seen here in spring. As migration proceeds, Yellow Warblers, Common Yellowthroats, and Willow Flycatchers may be heard singing from the willows and cattails in the marsh. The mowed grasses on the right attract Chipping Sparrows, American Robins, and other ground-feeding birds. The shrubs there often harbor Carolina Wrens, House Wrens, and House Finches. This open area provides good hunting terrain for raptors, including Sharp-shinned and Cooper’s hawks, American Kestrels, and Merlins. Resident Red-tailed Hawks may often be seen by scanning the marsh; a pair nested in a white pine behind the administration building in 2003. An Eastern Screech Owl will often respond to calling in this area at first light in the morning.

Just before the water fountain on the right of Meadow Road, take the unmarked path up the hill to the western edge of the arboretum. An arboretum neighbor at the corner of the chain-link fence maintains a feeding station much of the year. In the spring and summer orioles and hummingbirds sometimes pause there. In winter Red-bellied Woodpeckers and wintering Red-winged Blackbirds or Common Grackles may join the more common feeder birds. The top of the hill on the right is a favorite haunt for a flock of Wild Turkeys, especially in fall and winter. Continue left along the fence, and watch for ground sulkers such as Hermit Thrush and House Wren in the unkempt brush just off the property. Honeysuckles and other berried shrubs in this area attract flocks of American Robins, Mourning Doves, Cedar Waxwings, and other fruit eaters in fall. At the end of the fence the landscape opens to the Leventritt Shrub and Vine Collection, first opened to the public in 2002. It is an uncommonly large open area in this tree museum.



House Wren on a honey locust branch. All photographs by the author.

You have two options for continuing your walk at this juncture: a walk through the shrub and vine collection or a more rugged path that climbs the hill in front of you into the North Woods, a relatively old stand of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees, many of which were in place before the arboretum was established and are therefore not part of the accessioned collection. Birds seeking deeper woods are often seen or heard there, including Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo,

Ovenbird, and Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, and Black-and-white warblers. Follow that unmarked path straight along the ridge and you will eventually come out on Bussey Hill Road near the entrance to the Dana Greenhouses.

If you choose the easier walk through the shrub and vine collection and then go left, you will arrive at about the same point. In either case, turn right and ascend Bussey Hill Road until it forks, checking for raptors on the hill to your left and land birds in the many shrubs on the right. Rather than continuing up Bussey Hill Road, however, go straight, ignoring the turn to the right that goes to the Centre Street Gate, and continue onto Valley Road.

Several hundred yards down Valley Road the sign for Conifer Path is on the right; take it for a somewhat longer but more interesting route to Hemlock Hill Road. Conifer Path takes you into evergreen woods with many native and introduced species of pine, spruce, fir, cypress, hemlock, and other more exotic conifers. The avian world here includes both common and rare species. The winter of 2008-2009 brought small flocks of White-winged Crossbills and Pine Siskins that were enjoyed by many. It is especially good in winter, when you may see Brown Creepers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, both species of nuthatches, and, rarely, Purple Finches. Woodpeckers, including Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Red-Bellied, Downy, and occasionally Hairy woodpeckers, work over Nikko firs and other exotic specimens here. A Barred Owl rested in this area for several weeks in recent winters.



Juvenile Cooper's Hawk on Hemlock Hill

After exploring the evergreen woods, continue on Conifer Path to its terminus on Hemlock Hill Road, near the Walter Street Gate. Turn left and follow Hemlock Hill Road with Bussey Brook on your left. This is a good area for migrant passerines such as Indigo Buntings and wood warblers. Hemlock Hill on the right is a reliable breeding ground for Pine Warblers and Red-breasted Nuthatches. For the past several years Cooper's Hawks have reused the same nest in a hemlock, fledging four young in 2007 and contributing to the statewide increase of this species.

When you reach the junction of Valley Road and Hemlock Hill Road (a map is erected there), take the gravel path labeled "Beech Path to the ponds" up the hill in front of you. Early in the morning or at dusk listen for Great Horned Owls in the tall conifers off to the right. As you ascend Beech Path there are several side paths off to the left. Take a sharp left at the crest of the slope, and follow the path marked "Oak Path to Explorers Garden (Chinese Path)."

The horticultural staff considers the Explorers Garden to be the most propitious location for new plant acquisitions potentially vulnerable to New England weather. It

holds some of the most unusual and attractive woody specimens in the entire collection. Take time to admire these beautiful plants, including dove tree, Franklin tree, fringe tree, and *Stewartia* varieties. The oldest specimen of paperbark maple in the United States is here as well, collected in China by E.H. Wilson in 1907.

Birds are plentiful along Chinese Path at any time of year. Both cuckoos, Indigo Buntings, and many migrant warblers have been heard or seen in this area, and Brown Thrashers nest there yearly. Interesting migrants, including Fox, White-throated, and White-crowned sparrows and Eastern Towhees, can be found in the grassy open area nearby. Listen carefully to distinguish the ubiquitous Chipping Sparrows from Pine Warblers in early spring, as both prepare to nest in the white pine grove to the southeast.

The summit of Bussey Hill lies to the northwest, and during spring migration it is worth the modest effort to reach the top. Scan the large oaks where Tennessee, Bay-breasted, Magnolia, and Blackburnian warblers and Warbling, Blue-headed, and Yellow-throated vireos have been seen in recent years. Don't miss the vernal pool surrounded by a shrubby thicket just down the slope to the east of the road that circles to the top of Bussey Hill. The wet habitat attracts warblers, vireos, Scarlet Tanagers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks.

After you have finished your exploration of this interesting hilltop, follow Bussey Hill Road down through the many oaks and nut trees on the left and the birch collection on the right. In spring the big trees often contain migrants, and it is always worth a second look through the birches in winter for Redpolls or other winter finches. When you reach the road junction, turn right and descend the slope. The collection of leguminous, or pod-bearing, trees on the left often attracts birds; Cedar Waxwings appear to be especially fond of the seedpods of the Japanese pagoda tree, native to the Far East. On the right you pass the extensive lilac collection, destination for thousands on Lilac Sunday in May (and a good day to avoid for birding). This area can be active, with all three of the mimics—Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, and Brown Thrasher—present in summer, as well as Northern Cardinals and Great Crested Flycatchers. As you follow the road downhill, check the top of the Massachusetts State Laboratory where a Red-tail, or perhaps another raptor, might be perched.



Cedar Waxwing feeding on pagoda tree pods

The landscape opens up at the bottom of the hill onto three ponds and the extensive rosaceous plant collection on the right, after you make the left turn onto Meadow Road. This is home to many migrant sparrow species—Fox, Song, Savannah, White-crowned, White-throated, and American Tree sparrows. Flocks of

House Finches can be found there year-round. Summer brings Yellow Warblers, Gray Catbirds, Baltimore and Orchard orioles, Eastern Kingbirds, Eastern Phoebes, and Northern Mockingbirds, all of which have nested in this area. The ponds provide habitat for Canada Geese, Mallards, and Double-crested Cormorants. In winter Hooded Mergansers and Black Ducks have been present when the water is open. A Great Blue Heron is often found feasting on the abundant fish and amphibians in the ponds. Green Herons nested in a filbert tree there several years ago. The pond area also attracts migrating warblers such as Blue-winged (which attempted to nest here in 2003), Yellow-rumped, Palm, and Northern Waterthrush. It is a good place to spend some time in any season.

As you proceed along Meadow Road back toward the main gate, scan the large maples and oaks on both sides for White-breasted Nuthatches, Black-and-White Warblers, and Blackpolls in spring and fall. On the left is a small marshy area where warblers, including Canada, Palm, Black-throated Blue, Northern Waterthrush, and Redstart have been found. Take the unmarked grassy path about a hundred feet beyond the collection of black locust trees that will allow you to explore this tiny wetland. The path will bring you out into the buckeye and horse chestnut collection that attracts Ruby-throated Hummingbirds when the trees flower in mid-May. Back on Meadow Road the linden collection and the Asian cork trees on the left are often full of foraging birds—Morning Doves, Robins, and Cedar Waxwings—as well as Warbling and Blue-headed vireos. Listen again for Least or Willow flycatchers calling from the willows on the right in late spring. Orchard Orioles have nested in a nearby Katsura tree for the past several years. You have now returned to your starting point. If time permits, have some lunch at one of the inexpensive restaurants on Center Street in Jamaica Plain just a few blocks from your location. Return later to tackle the Peters Hill walk.

### **The Second Walk: Walter Street Gate, Peters Hill and Bussey Brook Meadow**

Parking is available at the Walter Street Gate and along the side of Bussey Street (the only public roadway through the arboretum) near the entrance to Peters Hill. From Walter Street, walk 50 yards up Bussey Street to the gated road on the right leading to Peters Hill. This tract of some 72 acres was added to the Arboretum under a second indenture with the City of Boston in 1894. Its paved roads are also well maintained year round so that one can bird from them even in the dead of winter. In this walk the serious birder is encouraged to wander off the road and explore areas that have been productive at various seasons of the year.

As you ascend the entrance road there is an unmarked but well-worn path off to the right into an area predominated by large pines and spruces where Pine Warblers have nested and White-winged Crossbills have occasionally been seen in winter. This path parallels Peters Hill Road, the perimeter road around the hill, which you can join at any time. If you stay on the path you will see something special—one of Boston's 15 historic cemeteries. In 1711, Joseph Weld and 44 other men organized the Second Church of Christ on Walter Street, which once stood on Peters Hill. While only a dozen headstones dating from 1722 to 1812 remain, ten members of the Weld family,

including two who fought in the Revolutionary War and their wives and children, are buried in this graveyard. A history of this interesting cemetery is available in an article in *Arnoldia*, the quarterly magazine of the Arnold Arboretum, which you can access through their website (Lehmer 1961). You can follow this side path all the way to the southeast edge of the arboretum, bordered by the commuter rail tracks, passing some residential backyards with feeders for a good winter walk.

In other seasons, the better option is to get back on the paved road and take the paved path off to the left, leading to the summit of Peters Hill, at 240 feet the highest elevation on the grounds. When you reach the top you can see the skyline of downtown Boston. As you stand on the grassy summit looking toward the skyline, there is a forested area to your right from which you may hear Great-crested Flycatchers, Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Black-throated Green Warblers, and, later in May, Eastern Wood-Pewees and Wood Thrushes. In summer Chimney Swifts and Tree Swallows hawk insects around the hill. Common Nighthawks can be seen from here during their annual fall migration from mid-August into early September.



View of the Boston skyline from Peters Hill

Just a few hundred feet down the north slope are half a dozen birdhouses that have provided nesting sites for Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds since they were erected in 2004. The last previous breeding record in the arboretum for either species was by Faxon in 1895. Spring 2004 was also remarkable for the first documented breeding pair of Bobolinks in over 100 years. They created a nest in the tall grass on the slope of Peters Hill and were seen bringing food to the site, but the progeny probably did not survive a hot spell in July. Although Bobolinks are known to be “site-faithful” and have been seen during every spring migration since 2004, they have not nested again despite a mowing regimen designed to encourage nesting.

You can backtrack on the paved path to the perimeter roadway or follow a small path down the hill behind you on the southeast side. That path will take you back to the roadway as well, passing through a stand of large oaks, maples, and larches that is often active with feeding birds during spring migration. Turn left at the road to continue your circumnavigation of the hill.



Tree Swallow on nest box

There are wet spots on both sides of the road in this area. The one on the right is down the slope where several water-loving dawn redwoods grow. Solitary Sandpipers, Swamp Sparrows, and Northern Waterthrushes have been seen there, so consider taking a closer look at this small oasis in spring. A stream that runs down the hill and meets the road on the left creates the other wet area. Indigo Buntings, Chestnut-sided Warblers, and Common Yellowthroats have been seen seeking water and insects there in the past. Farther along the road you pass a variety of fruit-bearing trees that are visited by many bird species in the fall.

At the intersection of the perimeter road with a connecting link to Poplar Gate is a grove of tall cottonwoods. In June 2005 one of these fine trees hosted two Baltimore Oriole nests, a Warbling Vireo family, and a pair of Great Crested Flycatchers nesting in a hole in a branch. Orchard Orioles, House Wrens, and Yellow Warblers have also nested in this area.

If you are short on time, follow Peters Hill Road around to the left to return to your start at the Peters Hill and Walter Street gates. After passing an open area on the right, you will come to a steep slope. At its base is a small path that passes under several flowering trees that are popular with migrant warblers in spring. Indigo Buntings, House Wrens, orioles, and vireos are often heard along this forested edge. Beyond a huge puddingstone rock face you can ascend to a ridge that overlooks the arboretum stump dump and mulch area. In addition to birds that may be seen along the tree-lined cliff, you can look down on this dump and see a variety of birds in every season. The paths wandering along the ridge eventually lead back to the main roadway and to your starting point. In the fall this intersection of the perimeter road and the entrance road has had Redpolls and other winter finches.

If you want to extend your walk beyond Peters Hill, turn right at the cottonwood grove and take the roadway down to the Poplar Gate. Be careful crossing Bussey Street. Once across, step up on the low stone wall and follow the unmarked but well travelled path paralleling South Street. Listen for Wood Thrushes, Eastern Wood-Pewees, or perhaps a Veery in the mixed forest of hemlock and deciduous trees. If you are seeking an uphill hike, take one of several steep paths to the left leading to the summit of Hemlock Hill to look for more forest species before returning to the path along South Street. It will take you to a small stream (Bussey Brook again) that you can usually cross easily, but if the water is too high, walk out to South Street and on to the crosswalk at South Street Gate.

Cross South Street, and enter Bussey Brook Meadow, a 24-acre parcel that is the newest section of the arboretum and connects the South Street Gate to the Forest Hills MBTA Station on Washington Street (the closest T stop to the arboretum). Although this is part of the arboretum, it is also under the stewardship of the Arboretum Park Conservancy, an energetic group of volunteers that raised funds for its development in the 1990s and continues to provide financial support. The conservancy also runs work projects to improve the habitat and organizes bird and wildflower walks several times a year. It sponsored the placement of Wood Duck and screech owl/kestrel boxes in the area in an attempt to attract nesters.

Near the South Street entrance gate, Eastern Screech-Owls often respond to calling at first light and probably nest nearby. The forested slope on the left is good for Northern Flickers, Red-bellied Woodpeckers, and Hermit Thrushes. When Blackwell Path, the only path that leads through this area, was developed as a stable gravel passage, some of the invasive perennials and woody plants were cleared, but they still comprise much of the vegetation in this section of the arboretum. This is the least managed part of the arboretum grounds. The wildness is appreciated by birds and mammals, including raccoons, skunks, foxes, coyotes, and deer, all of which can be seen here. The most recent sightings of Ring-necked Pheasants in the arboretum were here as well. American Woodcock and Wilson's Snipe have been flushed in early spring. The only woodcock recorded on the Boston Christmas Bird Count in 2009 was seen here.

As you proceed down the gravel path, the area on the right between the path and the commuter-line tracks that form the eastern border of the arboretum begins as an overgrown meadow but soon becomes marshy with cattails, *Phragmites*, and invasive, but pretty, yellow flag iris. The lower section of this area is often flooded in the spring and can attract Mallards, Canada Geese, and Wood Ducks. Carolina and Winter wrens, Red-winged Blackbirds, and Swamp and Song sparrows may be here in the early spring. Farther along the path is a thicket on your left opposite a small clearing. Birds collect here in all seasons, so it is wise to stop to see what might be hiding in the brush. A little farther along, pay attention to a cul-de-sac on the left about halfway toward the station where Hermit Thrushes, Northern Waterthrushes, and other ground-loving birds may congregate for worms and insects. After the main marsh area on the right, the landscape opens up to a wildflower meadow and a view of the Forest Hills MBTA Station Clock Tower, where you can check the weathervane for a Red-tailed Hawk or perhaps a different raptor. A rare Northern Shrike was recorded in this area in the winter of 2008.

It is easiest to return to South Street by back-tracking on the gravel path, but the more adventurous and sure-footed could walk to the right over the large grated culvert that collects Bussey Brook and carries it under the train tracks to connect with Stony Brook, which in turn empties into the Charles River. A path, sometimes quite wet in spring, follows the chain-link fence along the tracks and affords a broader view of the marsh and meadow from the other side.

Returning to the entrance gate by either route, cross South Street to the base of Hemlock Hill Road. Follow this roadway, staying left at the fork, and you will return to your starting point and your transportation. Along the way, enjoy the rhododendron and laurel collections on either side of the road and, of course, check for birds in this area, which is productive in all seasons.

These two walks do not begin to cover the full expanse of the Arnold Arboretum collection and its many good birding sites. Nevertheless, they should provide a good list of avian species and a pleasant walk. I hope this will encourage you to return again and again to explore this special jewel in Olmsted's Emerald Necklace. 

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- The Arnold Arboretum website is <<http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu>>. Directions, maps, and a checklist of birds can be found under VISIT.
- The Arboretum Park Conservancy website is <<http://arboretumparkconservancy.org>>. It includes more information on Bussey Brook Meadow and a schedule of walks.

**Bob Mayer** is a semi-retired psychiatrist who has lived and birded in Boston for over forty years. In 2000 he moved to Jamaica Plain, became a docent and School Program Guide at the Arnold Arboretum, and has been birding there regularly year round. In addition to the cited reference, he wrote an earlier site guide in the October 1999 issue of *Bird Observer*: "Birding the Lower Emerald Necklace: Jamaica Pond to the Back Bay." He would like to thank Mary Lou Kaufman for reviewing and editing a draft of this article, Bob Stymeist for his editorial review, and Sheila Connor, Horticultural Research Archivist at the Arnold Arboretum, for her editorial assistance.



SNOW BUNTING BY SANDY SELESKY

# Feathers and Flares

*Joey Mason*

On May 6, 2009, an injured first-year Red-tailed Hawk was reported to me by a cranberry bog foreman. He'd seen it on the ground by a small bog, a stone's throw away from some transmission lines. By the time I got there 45 minutes later, the bird had moved. It was 20 feet up in a tree along the wooded edge of the transmission line easement.

I wondered whether I needed to catch him, since he'd clearly recovered enough to get up in the tree. I parked my truck and scoped him out. He didn't have an injured wing because neither was drooping. His flight feathers looked a little strange, but I couldn't make out why. I got out of the truck and approached the Red-tail on foot. It immediately flew in a steady downward soar to the ground.

I approached slowly until I could get a fix on where he was among the vegetation. Once I found him, I took my coat off and ran, hopping over tussocks of grass and around low bushes. He flapped and ran short hops and landed at the base of a bush, pivoted around to face me, and went into a defensive posture. He puffed out his feathers, rolled on his back exposing his hefty talons, and held both wings out to look as big and formidable as possible. I threw my coat over his head and grabbed his feet. This action seemed so demeaning for such an impressive display.

As I was running him down, I could see his problem. His flight feathers had all been badly singed, so much so that most were just shafts. I thought at first that he was lucky to even be alive, especially if this was electrically related. He apparently was able to forage by working his way high enough into the trees to take short flights and was in good weight. But because this predator could easily become prey in his condition, I took him to a licensed rehabilitator. This little Red-tail was fed well while he underwent a complete flight-feather molt, replacing the old feathers with new. He was released, just in time for fall migration.

I was so busy during May and June that I put this incident to the back of my mind. When July came around, my schedule slowed down enough to sort through old emails and a pile of papers that had been accumulating for many months beside my desk. I had received an online petition <<http://www.thepetition.com/1/save-our-raptors>>, which I had saved. The issue it was addressing pertained to methane burners at landfills injuring and killing raptors. The picture of the Red-tailed Hawk displayed on the petition looked just like mine. I thought



Burned wing feathers on a Red-tailed Hawk. Photographs by the author.

how stupid I was to think my Red-tail's incident could be electrical. I searched for more information and ended up with an interesting paper on the subject (available at <<http://www.michiganhawkingclub.com>>) and several newspaper articles.

I contacted the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to find out what methane burners were located in the area where I had picked up the injured hawk, and



Redtailed Hawk with wing burn

they put me in contact with the landfill likely responsible. DEP knew nothing about raptors getting injured or killed by flares at that time. I met with the landfill personnel on July 2. I have worked with many people through the years, but I must say the landfill manager and environmental engineer were among some of the nicest and most helpful people I have ever done business with. I got the full tour and learned all about landfills, but don't ask me to recite it all back to you because the layering system of all the different materials is very complex.

A law enforcement agent from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service joined us later as we went to view the flare. Methane burners fall under the same regulations as utility poles that can also zap raptors. All native migratory birds are protected by law. However, finding a solution to this problem is in its infancy, so the landfill can only do its best to reduce the problem until a solution is eventually found. Electrical utilities already have many different solutions.

The most useful information I learned that day was that methane burns clear, and there is no smoke (unless there is a lot of moisture or other contaminants). This is why the birds do not see what they are flying into. It is better for the environment to burn the methane than it is to let it escape into the atmosphere. All those white PVC "candy canes" on landfills are there to vent the methane. If the methane is piped to one spot, it can be utilized for energy or burned cleanly. Landfills become rolling hills easily seen from a distance that attract raptors to forage for prey.

I got in contact with Stella Miller, who had set up the petition on the website. She has also put together a coalition, including New York solid waste associations and New York Audubon clubs, to address this matter from a manufacturers' stand-point. However, she didn't have any solutions beyond what had been noted in the articles that I had already read.

After a couple more phone calls to people familiar with electrical devices to deter raptors, I came up with a design that I was happy with. I met with the landfill people again on July 27. I sat down with their engineer to fabricate a device to make their flare stack unappealing to the birds and at the same time fulfill the manufacturers' criteria to maintain the warranty on the burner.

I had drawn and cut out a tall thin triangle of paper at home, which I placed in the middle of the table for the engineers to work with. It didn't take long for us to come up with a "crown" of spikes that could resist the continual heat and would be uncomfortable for birds, ranging in size from kestrels to herons, to perch on. I wanted the spikes to be tall enough so the space between would not be appealing for kestrels, and the spikes had to be reinforced inside so they wouldn't droop from the heat. They couldn't have holes that cavity nesters would think might be suitable sites to investigate. It then had to be drawn up and sent to the manufacturer.

More days passed, long enough for another call to go pick up another injured Red-tailed Hawk, a thin adult this time, inside the landfill compound. The vegetation on the capped end of the landfill had a lot of goldenrod and tall weeds, so I could see why this bird had been able to stay hidden for a while.

Less than a month after our meeting, the "crown" was installed, and there have been no more reports of burned raptors. This is not a 100% cure for the problem, but it is all that can be done at this time. A bird can still be burned if it flies over the flame, but they're not as likely to try to perch on the stack anymore.

To my delight, I have recently heard that another new burner in a neighboring town is getting "crowned." It will be delivered with the "crown" in place from the same manufacturer that cleared the initial design. DEP, now aware of the problem, can inform owners of new flares (which are permitted by DEP) to look into making their stacks more raptor-friendly.

I have started to visit more landfills this year to learn more about flares and have found there is much more to this issue. I hope to develop a Better Management Practice. Only 25 of the 736 landfills in the state of Massachusetts are active. However, 40 landfills have some type of flare. I have my work cut out for me, but you can help. If you know of any documented report (date and species) of a bird injured by a methane flare at a town landfill, I would very much appreciate hearing about it.

I saw numerous kestrels on my visits to the first landfill in 2009. I am disheartened to think that methane could be one more thing contributing to their decline. 

*Joey Mason* got hooked on watching birds of prey in the early 1980s after numerous visits to Hawk Mountain Sanctuary in Pennsylvania. In 1985 she learned how to band hawks in Cape May, NJ, where she continues to band raptors every fall for the Cape May Raptor Banding Project. Joey learned much about falcon behavior while working on the peregrine recovery team for the Colorado Division of Wildlife during the summers of 1987 and 1988. With the help of Mike Maurer in 1989, she initiated a nest box project for American Kestrels in southeastern Massachusetts on cranberry grower-owned properties. In 2000, she spearheaded the Raptor Retrofit Project to prevent osprey electrocutions on cranberry grower properties, along with being widely consulted about suitable placement of osprey nesting platforms. Every year Joey monitors and maintains numerous American Kestrel, Tree Swallow, and Eastern Bluebird nest boxes.

# Fourteenth Report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee

*Marshall J. Iliff and Matthew P. Garvey*

The fourteenth report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (hereafter MARC or the Committee) details the evaluation of 66 reports involving 47 species or subspecies. Fifty-two records were accepted.

One new species has been added to the State List in the current report, a Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), documented in Falmouth in January 2009. (A 1999 report of Pink-footed Goose in Dennis is being re-reviewed.) This brings to 492 the total list of species accepted for Massachusetts. Other highlights from this report include the first physically documented Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*) and Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*), records for the Commonwealth; the fifth confirmed United States record of Brown-chested Martin (*Progne tapera*); the first state records of Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) since 1985; and a record-shattering four records of Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*), involving eighteen birds.

The list of species reviewed by the MARC (the "Review List") is available at <<http://www.maavianrecords.com>>, the Committee's new Internet address. Several changes to the Review List were made at the Committee's February 2010 annual meeting. First, Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus auduboni*) and Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) were removed because both have now been proven to occur regularly in Massachusetts' offshore waters. Although the jaeger may occur in offshore waters anywhere, the shearwater apparently is restricted to the warm, deep water south of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard; the Committee will continue to review any reports from outside these species' normal ranges. The MARC has also edited its Review List for consistency. It will now review all Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) and Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) reports, regardless of the bird's sex and age.

The Committee will continue to review certain records of rare birds at the non-species level as well, such as records of distinctive subspecies or subspecies groups. While MARC has long reviewed subspecies reports at its discretion, this year its policy was formalized with a change to the MARC bylaws which provides that "[r]ecords of species or other taxa (e.g., subspecies, genera) that are geographically or temporally rare will be evaluated at the discretion of the Committee." The MARC Review List was updated accordingly to mirror the new language in the bylaws. The Committee is careful to keep such review at its discretion and continues to only list full species (*sensu* AOU 1998) on its Review List. In this report six records have been accepted at the subspecies level.

The bylaws were also amended to mandate an automatic recirculation whenever a first round of ballots is not unanimous. This change ensures that all members of the Committee will gain the benefit of any dissent, even if the initial voice in the

wilderness is a lone one. The voting standards remain stringent; on the second and third rounds, a record needs the support of all or all but one member in order to gain acceptance. All accepted records in this report were accepted unanimously on the first round unless noted.

Most submissions are now accompanied by photographic evidence, signaled in the species accounts below with a "ph." Indeed, for many of this year's records, no formal submission was made, but the Committee was able to accept a record based solely on the photographic (ph.), video (v.) or audio (au.) record made public through such useful resources as Massbird.org and the myriad photo-sharing Internet services. The Committee continues to encourage written submissions (signaled below with a "†"), even where photographs exist. Written submissions often provide important clues to identification (such as behavior) or provenance that even an exquisite suite of photos may not. One need not be the original finder to make a submission. MARC's primary objective in assessing reports is weighing evidence. The observer names in parentheses refer only to those who provided documentation; the names are followed by the MARC record number. In addition, when known, we try to credit the discoverer either in the text or with an asterisk (\*) if he or she supplied evidence. All documentation received by the Committee is maintained permanently in the Committee archives. In the near future, MARC plans to make the supporting evidence for accepted records publicly available on its website.

Recent advances in digital photography and video have made it easier and less expensive to obtain and store high quality documentary evidence. The concomitant increase in data has provided both opportunities and challenges to the MARC. While modern photography has greatly increased the number of unequivocally documented records, it cannot eliminate falsified or dishonest submissions. It goes without saying that the ability of avian records committees like ours to assess bird records, whether based on written descriptions, photographs, or other documentation, is dependent upon honest submissions from the birding community. Computer technology has perhaps made it easier for submissions to be faked in a compelling manner and has therefore increased the risk that MARC could be duped. Indeed, one of the records in this report represents the first instance (that we know of) where a sighting was reported to the MARC in a dishonest fashion. Fortunately the record was clarified before voting occurred, which in this case led to the report's failure to gain acceptance, and factored into the failure of other reports where the same individual was the lone observer. We hope this instance will be the last of its kind, but unfortunately we will need to remain vigilant to protect the integrity of Massachusetts records.

In an effort to provide more specific locality information for each record, this report now lists the location, town, and county (in italics). Offshore waters within MARC's purview are those in the ocean region defined by the median line between Massachusetts and the nearest point of land outside the state, and extending 200 miles offshore (Rines 2009). Species taxonomy and nomenclature follow the seventh edition of the AOU Checklist (AOU 1998) and supplements (e.g., Chesser et al. 2009). Each species is listed with its scientific name the first time it is mentioned in the text but

not thereafter. Subspecies nomenclature follows *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World* (version 6.4) taxonomy, available at <<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist>>.

Finally, the Committee wishes to extend its warmest and most sincere thanks to retiring MARC secretary, Marj. Rines, for her unflagging involvement and support of the MARC practically since the Committee's inception. As secretary, Marj. devoted more than ten years to the substantial processes of filing, archiving, prodding (!), and tabulating votes and various other critical duties. In fact, she is responsible for most of the records in the current report. Marj. developed and maintained the MARC website and record database, thereby moving the Committee forward into the digital and Internet age. She produced the last ten annual MARC Reports. Her efforts are especially notable because she also successfully led other critical initiatives for the Massachusetts birding community, including the seasonal reports and database maintenance for *Bird Observer*, maintaining the popular Massbird.org website, and assuming a leadership role in the Menotomy Bird Club. Accordingly, the Committee wishes Marj. all the best in her many continuing roles, which contribute so much to Bay State ornithology.

Late in 2009 Matt Garvey succeeded Marj. Rines as secretary. The 2009 roster of MARC voting members was: Jeremiah Trimble (Chair), Denny Abbott, David Clapp, Richard S. Heil, Marshall J. Iliff, Erik Nielsen, Wayne R. Petersen, James P. Smith, and Robert Stymeist. For 2010, Iliff replaced Trimble as Chair, and Trevor Lloyd-Evans, Blair Nikula, and Richard R. Veit replaced Abbott, Nielsen, and Trimble, whose terms expired. We thank them for their service as voting members and thank Trimble for serving three years as MARC chair, for establishing the new MARC website, and for supplying many of the statistics for this report. We also thank Nielsen and Naeem Yuseff for valuable assistance with the MARC website and database and for helpful comments on this report.

MARC has a new web address this year and is planning to provide more information on Massachusetts bird records in the near future. Please visit us at <<http://www.maavianrecords.com>>.

## ACCEPTED RECORDS

### **Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)**

This report kicks off with its only addition to the state list, an adult Pink-footed Goose discovered by Greg Hirth at Salt Pond, Falmouth, *Barnstable*, January 12–15, 2009 (ph. B. Burden; †G. Hirth\*; 2009-10). The goose showed no signs of captivity and was traveling with a flock of wild Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*). An earlier Massachusetts record from the vicinity of the Dennis Pines Golf Course, Dennis, *Barnstable*, January 16–February 20, 1999, was considered of “questionable origin” (1999-24; Rines 2002), in part due to the bird's confiding behavior. Pink-footed Geese are rarely kept in captivity, and their numbers in the Northeast have been increasing steadily since the mid-1990s; this increase has been concurrent with a rise in the breeding population in Greenland (Perkins 1998). Occurrences of other Greenland-

breeding geese have been on the rise as well (e.g., Barnacle Goose *Branta leucopsis* and “Greenland” Greater White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*), and so it no longer seems appropriate to continue the conservative treatment of Pink-footed Goose records. In light of this change in status, the MARC is currently reconsidering the 1999 record.



Pink-footed Goose. Salt Pond, Falmouth, Barnstable, Jan 14, 2009. Photo by Barry Burton.

### “Richardson’s” Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii hutchinsii*)

A flock of seven adults that split its time between Plum Island and Ipswich, Essex, November 7–14, 2009, represents the second-largest flock recorded of this species in Massachusetts (†J. Berry\*, ph. P. Brown, ph. N. Landry, †T. Wetmore\*; 2009-36); a group of nine at Turner’s Falls, November 27–December 2, 2007, was the only higher count. At least one bird was present starting on October 31, 2009, though it was not clear if that bird was part of the flock of seven; one Committee member felt a total of eight Richardson’s Cackling Geese were present during the period. Another Committee member noted that the distinctive blocky head shape evident on each bird in a photo of seven birds together was classic for the expected Richardson’s subspecies but urged caution because he felt that photos of the lone bird may have indicated a form of “Lesser” Canada Goose (e.g., *Branta canadensis parvipes*).

### Ross’s Goose (*Chen rossii*)

March 2009 produced an unprecedented incursion of Ross’s Geese in multiple flocks. The Ross’s records began with a state-high count of seven at Argilla Road, Ipswich, Essex, March 15, 2009 (ph. P. Brown, ph. R. Heil\*, ph. M. Iloff, †T. Wetmore; 2009-06), although others had seen seven white geese there on March 14 but did not identify them as Ross’s. Although the seven birds remained together, some observers noted that they sometimes separated into two sub-groups: apparently a family (two adults and three first-winters) and a pair (two adults). The flock remained through March 23, 2009, and during this time was seen also on Plum Island, a well-known alternate location for geese using Argilla Road. The day after the initial report of the Ipswich flock, eight adults in Easthampton, Hampshire, March 16–18, 2009, set a new state high (†R. and L. Beida\*, ph. J. van Heerden; 2009-04); five seen in Hadley March 20–22, 2009 (*North American Birds [NAB]* 63: 391), were presumably part of this same flock but were not reviewed by the Committee. Two more adults were found in the vicinity of Kimball Farm, Haverhill/West Newbury, Essex, March 19–28, 2009 (ph. †S. Mirick\*; 2009-05). Finally, an immature seen on Plum Island March 22–30, 2009 (ph. N. Landry, ph. J. Trimble, †T. Wetmore; 2009-07), was known to be a different bird, because on March 23 Tom Wetmore observed eight birds together, with the group of seven departing for Ipswich while a lone immature stayed

behind. The end date for the latter bird is listed as March 31 (*NAB* 63: 391), but this is apparently in error. Ross's Goose has been increasing in the East for two decades now, and records from eastern New England have been on the rise in the past eight years. Interestingly, a flock of 17 "Western" Greater White-fronted Geese (*Anser albifrons frontalis*) also made an appearance in Saugus/Revere, *Essex/Suffolk*, March 7–15, 2009 (*NAB* 63: 391), suggesting that a single phenomenon affected several taxa of geese wintering mid-Continent. Roberts (2009) places the 2009 records in context, noting that a number of Ross's were seen east of their normal range in spring 2009, including one in Maine and several on Prince Edward Island. Perkins (2009) goes further, providing weather maps suggesting that strong southwesterlies on March 6–13, 2009, were likely responsible for the eastward displacement of these geese and several other species. Prior to this year Massachusetts had just three records of Ross's Goose: two at Sunderland, *Franklin*, March 25–26, 1997 (Petersen 1998); one immature at Chilmark, *Dukes*, October 14–22, 2001 (Rines 2002; note that this report erroneously considers this bird an adult); and one at Gill, *Franklin*, October 21–13, 2004 (Rines 2006). When evaluating out-of-range Ross's Geese, the Committee is careful to eliminate the very real possibility of Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) x Ross's Goose hybrids; at least one such bird has been reported in Massachusetts, in the Newburyport area, *Essex*, November 9–27, 1999. The Committee is gathering information on this record, as putative hybrids pose difficult identification issues.

### **Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)**

One was discovered by Tom French at Orlando's Ponds, Charleton, *Worcester*, December 3–13, 2008 (†M. Lynch, ph. †S. Carroll; 2008-36). Although older records of Barnacle Goose often considered the birds to have possibly escaped from human confinement, the recent upsurge in records, consistent timing for state reports (usually October–December), and occurrence with flocks of migratory Canada Geese (and occasionally other species like "Greenland" Greater White-fronted or "Richardson's" Cackling Geese) have contributed to the current understanding that most Barnacle records in New England pertain to wild birds. Thus, this Charleton record passed unanimously on its first round, and no member showed strong reservations about the bird's provenance.

### **"Eurasian" Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca crecca*)**

A single male "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal at Thompson's Meadow, Salem, *Essex*, April 14, 2008 (ph. †C. Jackson\*; 2008-27), was found during peak spring migration of "American" Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca carolinensis*), matching the pattern of most Massachusetts records of the Eurasian form. The Committee reviews subspecies selectively, and while the Committee opted to review this report, "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal is probably regular enough in the state (one to four records per year) to not warrant review.

### **"Boreal" Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima borealis*)**

The Committee considered a report of an adult male "Boreal" Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima borealis*) from Bass Rocks, Gloucester, *Essex*, on January 2–4, 2008 (ph. †M. Iliff\*; 2008-34). Although not reflected in the MARC record, Jeremiah

Trimble also observed this bird at the same location on February 3, 2008. Useful field marks that separated this bird from *S. m. dresseri* (the expected subspecies in Massachusetts waters) included bill process ending in a point, bill color orange or yellow-orange rather than greenish, white face with greenish color restricted to rear of face, and head shape with steep forehead and flat top. In addition, the black along the lower margin of the bill process was even, rather than wedge-shaped. Intermediates occur (e.g., Beetz 1916, Mendall 1980, Griscom and Snyder 1955), so this taxon should be identified with caution, but this record appeared to involve a bird matching pure *borealis*. This form of Common Eider breeds in Greenland and on the Somerset and Ellesmere Islands, Nunavut, south to Southampton Island, Hudson Strait, and northern Labrador, and occurs regularly in winter in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia (Johnsgard 1979, AOU 1957). Reports in the Northeastern United States are few. If we pay more attention to winter eider flocks, it may prove to be regular, but to date we are aware of just five other reports from Massachusetts: one bird shot at Muskeget on March 15, 1980; one shot at Newburyport on November 16, 1933 (both Veit and Petersen 1993); one found dead at Martha's Vineyard on June 16, 1946 (Chalif 1947); an adult male at Provincetown, *Barnstable*, December 28, 2006–early January 2007 (ph. J.P. Smith et al.); and an adult male in Gloucester Harbor on January 2, 2007 (ph. D. Pavlik et al.). It is probably regular in small numbers in northern Maine, and several, along with several intergrades, have recently been found each year in southern Maine (D. Lovitch, L. Bevier pers. comm.). It is also known from Connecticut (AOU 1957) and New York (Bull 1974). Much remains to be learned; for more information, see Goudie et al. (2000), Scott (1957), Mendall (1986), and Knapton (1997).

### **Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)**

One adult in breeding plumage photographed off Manomet Point, Manomet, *Plymouth*, on June 7, 2009 (ph. †I. Davies\*; 2009-21), added to the growing number of reports of adults from May and early June suggests a spring passage during this period. The one dissenting member felt that rather distant photos did not eliminate the possibility of an Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*). See also records not accepted.

### **Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*)**

Annual deep-water pelagic trips by the Brookline Bird Club have recently turned up a number of interesting records. In 2009, the best find was a single Black-capped Petrel about 15 miles northwest of the head of North Atlantis Canyon and about 77 miles south of Martha's Vineyard (40.170833° N, 70.758333° W) on July 18, 2009 (ph. †J.P. Smith\*, ph. †J. Trimble\*; 2009-18). It was seen by all aboard, and the photos make this the first physically documented record for Massachusetts. A recent paper (Howell and Patteson 2008) suggests the existence of two distinct plumage types of Black-capped Petrels, which they refer to as "Black-faced" and "White-faced" forms. Although it is yet unclear whether these represent different morphs, subspecies, or species, three Committee members commented that this individual was a good match for Howell and Patteson's white-faced form of Black-capped Petrel. Massachusetts has two prior accepted records of Black-capped Petrel: one at Andrew's Point, Gloucester, *Essex*, October 25, 2005 (2005-38; Petersen 1995), and

one at South Sunken Meadow Beach, North Eastham, *Barnstable*, August 19, 1991 (1991-02; Rines 2007). A third record is currently accepted from Stellwagen Bank, April 22, 1991 (1991-01; Petersen 1995), but the Committee is re-reviewing that record in light of the very real possibility that the photos show a Bermuda Petrel (*Pterodroma cahow*). Another reported from Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, June 23, 2009, has yet to be reviewed.

### **White-faced Storm-Petrel (*Pelagodroma marina*)**

On a boat only ten to fifteen miles south-southwest of *Nantucket* (41.05216° N, 70.3975° W) on August 28, 2009, Peter Trimble and Vernon Laux discovered this charismatic species and captured a dazzling suite of diagnostic photos (ph. P. Trimble\*, ph. V. Laux\*; 2009-35). Committee members speculated that the species is regular in Massachusetts waters in late summer—perhaps regular enough to consider not reviewing the bird in the future, something sea-worthy birders would surely have fun trying to establish.

### **American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)**

Three at Gooseberry Neck, Westport, *Bristol*, November 15, 2009 (†D. Eastman\*; 2009-08), were described to the Committee's satisfaction. One member noted that Great White Pelican (*P. onocrotalus*), which has been found as an escapee on the East Coast, was not eliminated, but was satisfied that a record of three birds together must pertain to American White.

### **Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*)**

A golfer found a hatch-year bird on the Duxbury Yacht Club Golf Course, Duxbury, *Plymouth*, November 3, 2009 (ph. J. Carnuccio\*; 2009-29), and fortunately used his Blackberry to snap some photos of this distinctive species, which was not reported after the day of its discovery. Of Massachusetts' eight Wood Stork records, three are from November; one additional November record of eleven birds at Plymouth Beach, *Plymouth*, November 18, 1963, has not gained general acceptance and may be reviewed by MARC.

### **Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanus forficatus*)**

Two Swallow-tailed Kites seen over Harmony Lane, Brewster, *Barnstable*, on May 10, 2009 (†D. Clapp\*; 2009-17), constituted a remarkable number for one location and the state high count. The record was submitted as three birds, and while four Committee members accepted it as such, the majority felt the careful description of the sighting and circumstances did not sufficiently establish that three birds were present. The timing was typical; most Swallow-tailed Kites in Massachusetts occur from late April to late May.

### **Gyr Falcon (*Falco rusticolus*)**

One apparent brown morph at Plum Island, *Essex*, November 27– December 3, 2008 (†D. Chickering\*, ph. T. Wetmore; 2008-32), proved difficult for the Committee. It passed (8-1) on its second round, due in part to the addition of photographs by Tom

Wetmore from December 3. Extremely distant, the photos were not considered diagnostic by all members; those in support of the identification noted the apparent falcon shape, large size, dark color, and long tail relative to the wings.

### “Arctic” Dunlin (*Calidris alpina arctica*)

Another distinctive yet seldom reported subspecies considered by the Committee this year was the diminutive “Arctic” Dunlin. A July 29, 2007, visit to South Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, was highlighted by an odd hybrid sandpiper believed to be a White-rumped Sandpiper x Dunlin (*Calidris fuscicollis x alpina*) and by an unusually small, dull-colored Dunlin in full-breeding plumage. The latter bird was identified as *C. a. arctica* (ph. M. Garvey\*, ph. †M. Iliff\*; 2007-56) based on its short bill, buff-gold back color, reduced black belly patch, and small size relative to nearby first-summer Dunlin, which were presumably *C. a. hudsonia*, the only expected subspecies of Dunlin on the East Coast (although *C. a. alpina* was collected once at Monomoy; Griscom 1937). Although a small number of first-summer Dunlin may oversummer in Massachusetts, mid-summer Dunlins are rare, and breeding-plumaged birds in fall migration are very rare because *C. a. hudsonia* molts to basic plumage prior to its southbound migration. “Arctic” Dunlin, in contrast, migrates before molting and also migrates much earlier, so any breeding-plumaged Dunlin seen in Massachusetts from July to September should be carefully scrutinized and documented. *C. a. schinzii* is the other smaller subspecies of Dunlin and also molts after migration but has a richer chestnut back. Both *C. a. arctica* and *C. a. hudsonia* share rather faint breast streaking, as compared to other Dunlin subspecies. *C. a. arctica* was collected once in Massachusetts, from Monomoy, on August 11, 1900 (Griscom 1937). Although there have been other sight records thought to pertain to this subspecies, this record may represent just the second confirmed occurrence in the AOU area. The Committee plans to review the other Massachusetts record as well.



“Arctic” Dunlin, South Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, Jul 29, 2007. Photo by Marshall J. Iliff.

### Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*)

One of the premier birding events of 2009 was the first Massachusetts appearance of Ivory Gulls in 24 years. Jeremiah Trimble found the first on the breakwater at Eastern Point, Gloucester, *Essex*, January 17–22, 2009 (ph. †J. Trimble\*; 2009-01), and the cooperative adult was seen by hundreds during its stay in the area, which ultimately included wanderings as far inside the harbor as Jodrey Fish Pier. Amazingly, three days later, Barry Burden discovered a second adult at Plymouth Harbor, Plymouth, *Plymouth*, January 20–30, 2009 (ph. B. Burden\*, †J. Hanson, ph. †P. Kinnaly; 2009-02), which was similarly cooperative. Both birds were seen concurrently on some days, eliminating any doubt that two different birds were



Ivory Gull. Eastern Point, Gloucester, *Essex*  
Jan 17, 2009. Photo by Jeremiah Trimble.

involved. Massachusetts had 12 or 13 prior records of Ivory Gull, all from 1886–1985 (with a possible earlier specimen from Swampscott in the mid-1800s). The most recent was one at Plum Island, *Essex*, February 2–3, 1985 (*Bird Observer* 13: 157), although this record has not been reviewed by MARC. Interestingly, of the ten prior records with known age, all but one pertained to a first-winter bird.

### **Franklin’s Gull (*Larus pipixcan*)**

One second-winter or adult at Sandy Point State Reservation, Plum Island, *Essex*, on November 15, 2008 (ph. †R. Heil\*; 2008-29), was found among a concentration of gulls in the late afternoon and was well photographed.

### **Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*)**

One adult at Herring Cove, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, November 1–7, 2008 (ph.



Black-tailed Gull. Herring Cove,  
Provincetown, *Barnstable* Nov 1, 2008. Photo  
by Blair Nikula.

†B. Nikula\*; 2008-33), represented the first state record to be physically documented. The only prior accepted state record resulted from a single observer sighting of one at South Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, July 4, 2004 (Rines 2006). There are at least twelve additional reports for the East Coast, from Newfoundland (one), Nova Scotia (one bird that returned for several years to Sable Island), Rhode Island (one returned for three years), New York (two), New Jersey (one), Maryland (two), Virginia (three+ records including one returning for several years to the Chesapeake Bay-

Bridge Tunnel), and North Carolina (one). See also records not accepted.

### **Thayer’s Gull (*Larus thayeri*)**

Thayer’s Gull has been found with increasing frequency in Massachusetts in recent years, due to more awareness of this species as well as excellent gull-watching in the Gloucester area. One first-winter bird at Hellcat, Plum Island, *Essex*, on March 14, 2009 (ph. †J. Trimble\*; 2009-15), was well photographed, and the Committee was convinced that it was not a “Kumlien’s” Iceland Gull (*Larus glaucooides kumlieni*). Identification (and Committee review) of Thayer’s Gull is fraught with peril, given

the uncertainty surrounding the extent of its introgression with *kumlieni*, the acceptable variability in those two taxa, and the taxonomic status of each. Thus, while the Committee supports this record and others as fitting known characters for *thayeri*, we acknowledge that further study may shed new light on this especially enigmatic field problem, which may prompt reassessment of any or all Massachusetts records of Thayer's Gull. See also reports not accepted.

### **Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*)**

Bridled Tern is probably regular in small numbers over the deep water canyons of the Continental Shelf in July, August, and September. One apparent adult was at Hydrographer Canyon (39.970278° N, 69.520556° W) on September 10, 2008 (†T. Stephenson\*, ph. †S. Whittle\*; 2008-37).

### **Sooty Tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*)**

Photos of a bird found moribund at Smith's Point, *Nantucket*, on September 7, 2008 (ph. V. Laux; 2008-44), depicted a dark tern with white-spotted blackish upperparts and white underwing coverts, diagnostic of juvenile Sooty Tern. The bird died the following day, and the specimen was deposited at the Maria Mitchell Association.

### **South Polar Skua (*Stercorarius maccormicki*)**

“Now this is the kind of skua report I like!” exclaimed one Committee member in voting to accept this species within a taxonomically tricky family that poses notorious difficulties for records committees. A bird seen on August 15, 2007 (ph. †A. Wilson\*; 2007-57), at 41.30375° N, 69.29946° W, was especially interesting because the bird was banded and the band could be read in the photos. The band code indicated that the bird was banded by a team from Friederich Schiller University in a mixed Brown (*S. hamiltoni*) and South Polar skua colony on King George Island (62.2° S, 58.97° W) in the South Shetland Islands on February 9, 2005; it was believed to be a phenotypically pure South Polar Skua when banded (*vide* Marcus Ritz), and the Committee concurred with that determination based on the photos. This was possibly just the second banded South Polar Skua to be recovered in the North Atlantic (the previous one was from Greenland, July 31, 1975). Interestingly the same team from Friederich Schiller University had banded a hybrid South Polar x Brown Skua that was later recovered off the Flemish Cap in Greenland. This event should prompt caution in future identification and review of southern hemisphere skuas in the North Atlantic. See also records not accepted.



South Polar Skua. 41.30375° N, 69.29946° W, Aug 15, 2007. Photo by Angus Wilson.

### **Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*)**

This boreal bird was found by Lori Snell and identified by Edie Ray on April 25, 2009 (ph. J. Trimble; 2009-33), although it may have been present in the Pitch Pines (*Pinus rigida*) at Mass Audubon's Lost Farm, *Nantucket*, as early as April 15, 2009. It lingered until at least May 17, 2009, and while at times it was hard to find, diagnostic and exquisite photos of this male were taken.

### **White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)**

One adult at a Manomet feeder, *Plymouth*, August 6–12, 2009 (ph. I. Davies\*; 2009-20), fortuitously turned up at the home of Ian Davies, who was ready with his camera. Several other observers were able to visit and see this bird as well. Massachusetts has 27 records of White-winged Dove, and in 2009 had an unusually high total of five, most of which the Committee has yet to review.

### **Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*)**

Rufous Hummingbird records in Massachusetts and the Northeast continue to increase. One adult female at Hyannis, *Barnstable*, December 7–30, 2008, was banded on December 9 (ph. †S. Finnegan; 2008-35) and carefully measured to eliminate Allen's (*S. sasin*). The other, at a S. Yarmouth, *Barnstable*, feeder on September 9, 2009 (ph. A. Middleton\*; 2008-25), was reported to eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)), and upon inquiry the reporter provided stunning close-ups of a rufous-backed adult male.

### ***Selasphorus* sp. (*Selasphorus* sp.)**

Photos of a female/immature *Selasphorus* sp. at a Leicester, *Worcester*, yard October 7–8, 2008 (ph. †M. Rowden\*; 2008-26), confirmed the identification at the genus level. At its February 2010 annual meeting, the MARC decided to try for higher specificity and will re-review all records of *Selasphorus* sp. to clarify whether Broad-tailed Hummingbird (*Selasphorus platypterus*) can be eliminated and whether the record can be listed as Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird.

### **Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*)**

A Say's Phoebe spent September 13–14, 2009, at Keith Farm, Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard, *Dukes*, (ph. L. McDowell; 2009-32), long enough to allow for diagnostic photos. The bird was apparently in its hatch-year, as evidenced by its fluffy down feathers and rather bold wing bars.

### **Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*)**

This distinctive species was seen near the Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, May 7, 2009 (†D. Lang\*; 2009-19), and was described to the satisfaction of eight Committee members; the one dissenter opined that Eastern Kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*) had not been eliminated.

### **Gray Jay (*Perisoreus canadensis*)**

Although documented by written description only, a Gray Jay at the Moran Wildlife Management Area, Windsor, *Berkshire*, on January 1, 2009 (†J. Bishop\*;

2009-11), was in the expected part of the state and was well documented with descriptions of the species' dark crown, pale forehead, short bill and pale auriculars, thereby eliminating Northern Shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) and Northern Mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottus*).

### **Brown-chested Martin (*Progne tapera fusca*)**

A Brown-chested Martin at Cumberland Farms near the Middleboro/Halifax line, *Plymouth* (v. M. Garvey, ph. R. Heil, ph. M. Iliff\*, ph. H. Levesque, ph. J. Trimble\*; 2009-23), was plucked from an exceptionally large and diverse collection of swallows independently by both Marshall Iliff and Jeremiah Trimble on October 12, 2009. It lingered until October 14, 2009, and delighted dozens with its distinctive bow-winged aerial displays. Superb diagnostic photos captured the stream of dark spotting extending to the belly, indicating that the bird was of the migratory southern South America subspecies *P. t. fusca*.

Other swallows present at the same time included four Cliff (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonata*), four Bank (*Riparia riparia*) and one Rough-winged (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*), all unusually late, along with the expected smattering of Barn (*Hirundo rustica*), and hundreds of Tree swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*). The martin represented the fifth accepted record for the United States and the second for Massachusetts, the prior being a bird at South Monomoy, *Barnstable*, on June 12, 1983, and that specimen had been confirmed also as *P. t. fusca* (Petersen et al. 1986, Rines 2009). The other three accepted United States records are as follows: one *P. t. fusca* at Cape May, NJ, November 6–15, 1997 (Lehman 1998); one at Groton, New London, CT, July 1, 2006 (*NAB* 60: 507; Kaplan and Hanisek 2008) was likely *P. t. fusca* (not *P. t. tapera* as reported by ABA (2008)); and one photographed at Patagonia Lake, *Santa Cruz*, AZ, February 3, 2006 (*NAB* 60: 270). An additional sighting of one from near Goose Lake Prairie, *Grundy*, IL, June 30, 2007, that was well described by a very experienced observer (T. S. Schulenberg, pers. comm.), and another at Belle Glade, *Palm Beach*, FL, October 24, 1991 (Langridge and Hunter 1993), have not been accepted by the respective state records committees, but the latter was treated as hypothetical by Stevenson and Anderson (1994). *P. t. fusca* breeds in southern South America south to central Argentina, winters in northern South America, and occurs north to central Panama during the austral winter, April to September (Ridgely and Gwynne 1989).



Brown-chested Martin, Cumberland Farms near the Middleboro/Halifax line, *Plymouth*, Oct 14, 2009. Photo by Jeremiah Trimble.

### **Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*)**

Since its first accepted occurrence in November 2003, Cave Swallow has now come to be expected during strong cold fronts in November. The Committee reviewed

and accepted three records from November 2008. One bird seen at Millennium Park, West Roxbury, during strong NW winds (and a strong flight of finches and other land birds) on November 11, 2008 (†M. Garvey\*; 2008-22), provided a first record for *Suffolk*. On the same day, another one was at Sandy Point State Reservation, Plum Island, *Essex* (ph. R. Heil, †S. Sutton\*, †T. Spahr\*; 2008-23). Finally, one was seen at West Island, Fairhaven, *Bristol*, on November 16, 2008 (†R. Stymeist\*; 2008-39), as it flew westward along the shore. The south shore of Cape Cod and the *Bristol* coastline may be the best area for seeing the species in the state, although this area receives relatively sparse coverage from birders. As has come to be expected for these November occurrences, in each instance plumage was typical of the western subspecies *P. f. pallida*, although the Committee did not formally vote on these records at the subspecies level. In addition to these three records, 11 additional reports from November 2008, involving at least 52 individual birds, have yet to be reviewed by MARC.

### **Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*)**

One female at Fort Hill, Eastham, *Barnstable*, November 23–December 7, 2008 (ph. M. Faherty, †B. Parker\*; 2008-30), was well documented with photographs. This represented just the sixth record for the state.

### **Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus nivosus*)**

One hatch-year male found at the intersection of Eastern Point Boulevard and Fort Hill Avenue., Gloucester, *Essex*, on October 26, 2008 (ph. R. Heil\*; 2008-28), represented the earliest record (by three days; Veit and Petersen 1993) for Massachusetts. The winter of 2008–2009 was an excellent one for this species in New England, with at least seven records from Maine, two from New Hampshire, one in Connecticut, and one additional Massachusetts bird at Palmer, April 24–26, 2009 (*NAB* 63: 231,396); the latter report has yet to be reviewed by MARC.

### **Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*)**

One at the Boston Public Garden, Boston, *Suffolk*, on December 1, 2007 (†C. Floyd\*; 2007-49), was reviewed because it represented a record late date for Massachusetts; Veit and Petersen (1993) list November 27 as the previous latest record for the state. Although some six species of late warblers, including Black-throated Green (*Dendroica virens*), Pine (*Dendroica pinus*), Nashville (*Vermivora ruficapilla*), and multiple Orange-crowns (*Vermivora celata*), were present at the Public Garden during this period, a Magnolia on this date was exceptional. The somewhat brief description by a single observer failed to convince one Committee member on the third round circulation, but the other eight were convinced by the described field marks, especially the description of bold black flank streaking and white tail with a black tip.

### **Townsend's Warbler (*Dendroica townsendi*)**

One adult male at Chestnut Hill Reservoir, Boston, *Suffolk*, April 14–19, 2009 (ph. E. Nielsen, ph. D. Romps\*; 2009-03), was interesting in that the bird was first reported as a Magnolia Warbler, a species with similar heavy black flank streaking.

Although some individuals were skeptical because a Magnolia Warbler would have been exceptional on so early a date, it was not until David Romps found a Townsend's Warbler in the same location on April 17 that the subject of the original report became clear. This cooperative warbler remained three days after being correctly identified and was seen by dozens. Another Townsend's Warbler was a hatch-year bird captured, banded, measured, and photographed (by cell phone!) at Wing Island, Brewster, *Barnstable*, on November 7, 2009 (ph. †G. Putonen\*; 2009-34); it was relocated on November 9 by Mary Keleher.

### **MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmiei*)**

Massachusetts remains the hotspot in eastern North America for this handsome western warbler, with two more records in 2009. Paul Peterson found the first in the shadows of Fenway Park at the Victory Gardens in Boston, *Suffolk*, an obliging bird that entertained birders from November 17 through December 16, 2009 (v. M. Garvey, †P. Peterson\*, ph. R. Stymeist, ph. J. Trimble; 2009-30). The second, at Wright's Pond in Medford, *Middlesex*, November 21–December 14, 2009 (ph. J. Forbes, ph. A. Piccolo\*; 2009-31), was harder to document but still allowed for diagnostic photos. Of 24 records from East Coast states from Maine to North Carolina, 16 are from the Commonwealth and two are from Fenway's Victory Gardens. See also records not accepted.

### **Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*)**

It was fitting that Jim Sweeney should discover one of the fall season's multiple megas at his local patch, Cumberland Farms, Middleboro/Halifax, *Plymouth*, an immature Lark Bunting that remained over a month, November 4–December 13, 2009, and allowed for multiple diagnostic photos (ph. E. Nielsen, ph. †W. Petersen; 2009-27).

### **Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii*)**

Two Henslow's Sparrows made 2009 an exceptional year for this elusive *Ammodramus* sparrow. Mark Fairbrother found a singing male in Montague, *Franklin*, June 27–July 8, 2009 (v. M. Garvey, ph. P. Manship; 2009-25); it was well photographed, and the song was recorded on video. The other sighting was a one-day wonder by Paul Champlin at Allen's Pond in Westport, *Bristol*, on November 16, 2009 (ph. L. Miller-Donnelly; 2009-26). There have been only five records of Henslow's Sparrow since 2000; at one point it had been a rare breeder in the Commonwealth.

### **Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*)**

Another highlight in a banner fall season at Cumberland Farms in Halifax/Middleboro, *Plymouth*, was a surprisingly cooperative Le Conte's Sparrow that lingered from October 20–November 9, 2009 (v. M. Garvey, ph. M. Iliff\*, ph. R. Merrill, ph. E. Nielsen; 2009-24). It afforded scores of birders killer looks at a cryptic species. Diagnostic, close-up photos and a video showed juvenal feathers, indicating that this was a hatch-year bird. Perhaps under-reported because most individuals do

not reveal themselves as readily as this one, it represented only the third record since 2000.

### **Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)**

One photographed visiting a backyard feeder in South Natick, *Middlesex*, on April 18–19, 2009 (ph. †P. Loranger\*; 2009-09), represented the twelfth state record. There have been eight sightings in April, with the rest between October and January.

### **Black-headed Grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*)**

One apparent female photographed at a Beverly, *Essex*, feeder between November 30, 1957 and May 9, 1958 (ph. L. B. Smith; 1957-01), was widely seen at the time, and thankfully a photo of the bird munching on a sugared donut was located to establish the record. Given the difficulty of eliminating a first-winter male Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*), which can have rich orange on the breast, the Committee took three rounds to arrive at a decision. On the third round, the Committee unanimously agreed that although there was just a single photo, it showed the following diagnostic field marks: 1) bright orange breast with limited, fine streaking restricted to the sides; 2) buff-orange collar; and 3) a buff-orange rump. The latter is not widely mentioned as a Black-headed Grosbeak field mark, but specimen review by the Committee at the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology confirmed it as a valuable distinctive characteristic.

### **Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemanni*)**

A submission of six Hoaries from a feeder in Millbury, *Worcester*, December 15, 2007–February 24, 2008 (ph. †D. Berard\*; 2007-39), during a well-documented invasion year for both Common and Hoary Redpolls, caused problems for the Committee in terms of voting on how many birds were present. In a third round of voting, the Committee accepted at least two Hoary Redpolls. Some birds were submitted as being of the nominate *hornemanni* subspecies, but the Committee did not accept any birds as such. Low numbers of recaptures reported by West et al. (1968) suggest that while Hoary and Common redpoll (*A. flammea*) numbers may appear constant at a site, there is actually substantial turnover among birds, and some members noted that perhaps many individuals were present. Nonetheless, despite a plethora of photos submitted to support the record, Committee members felt they could not determine anything more than that “two or more” Hoary Redpolls were present. Generally, when submitting reports of multiple birds, a detailed accounting of the plumages and documentation *for each individual bird* is highly recommended. See also records not accepted.

### **“Greater” Common Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea rostrata*)**

The Committee accepted that one of the Common Redpolls at a feeder in Millbury, *Worcester*, on December 20, 2007 (ph. D. Berard\*; 2007-46), was of the large, thick-billed and dark “Greater” or “Greenland” subspecies (*Acanthis flammea rostrata*). It took three rounds for the Committee to settle on a number; ultimately, while one member believed two birds were present, the other members voted for the presence of one bird.

## NOT ACCEPTED RECORDS

### **Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*)**

Loon identification is often complicated by variable plumage dependent on season and age as well as by the vast distances that typically separate the observer from the loon. Thus the Committee takes a conservative stance on reports that do not include all field marks. Both these reports were of distant birds on open ocean: one at Marconi Beach, Wellfleet, *Barnstable*, January 12, 2008 (2008-02), and a basic-plumaged bird at Lot 1, Plum Island, *Essex*, June 4, 2008 (2008-16).

### **Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)**

Two records were reviewed and not accepted: one at Marconi Beach, Wellfleet, *Barnstable*, January 12, 2008 (2008-02), and two birds at Revere Beach, *Suffolk*, October 12, 2008 (2008-31). The *Barnstable* bird was seen distantly and submitted by a single observer. The *Suffolk* birds were seen initially at a distance, and the observers were unable to relocate them after attempting to move closer. Although a majority of the Committee voted to accept the Revere Beach record, four members were concerned that perhaps the observers were mistaken in their initial, more distant views, especially because Western Grebes only rarely take flight and should have been easy to relocate. Some Committee members also noted the date, which was about a month earlier than any other report for Massachusetts; almost all Western Grebes on the East Coast have been seen from mid-November to mid-May.

### **American Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*)**

Two historical records of American Flamingo were considered this year. One at Plum Island, *Essex*, September 16–October 25, 1964 (ph. observer unknown; 1964-02), and another at Natick, *Middlesex*, in August 1964, or more likely May 20, 1965 (Bagg and Emery 1965), were both accompanied by photographs (ph. observer unknown; 1964-03). The Committee took three rounds to agree that species identification indeed pertained to the North American form, which was separated as a species from the Old World Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) in 2008 (Banks, et al. 2008). Once identification was established, the thorny issue of provenance was considered, because American Flamingos have been kept somewhat frequently in collections. Evidence relating to the Natick bird strongly suggested that it was an escapee, because one of two birds imported from the Dominican Republic by a nearby Westwood resident had escaped prior to the sighting (Bagg and Emery 1965). The Natick record was unanimously considered in the third round to be of non-natural provenance. The Plum Island bird had no clear connection to the Westwood incident and garnered two votes to accept, but the majority was concerned that the date, location, and dull plumage of the bird were not suggestive of natural origin. Some stray flamingos have been treated as wild by Records Committees along the East Coast; for example, an adult photographed at Assateague Island, Worcester, MD, late June–September 3, 1972 (Rowlett 1972), was accepted as wild by the MD/DCRC (Davis 2005), in part due to its appearance after Hurricane *Agnes*. Similarly, many other records away from areas of regular occurrence in the Bahamas, southernmost Florida, and the Yucatan, have been tied to the passage of hurricanes (McNair and

Gore 1998). In contrast, the two Massachusetts records from the mid-1960s were not tied to tropical storms.

### **Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)**

One seen for a second or two while sea watching in the wake of Hurricane *Hanna* at Manomet Point, Manomet, *Plymouth*, on September 7, 2008 (2008-40), garnered no committee support. Concerns centered on the species' rarity (three previous state records) and the extremely brief view.

### **Eurasian Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*)**

The Committee was not convinced by a brief, single-observer description of a flyby Eurasian Kestrel at Lot 1, Plum Island, *Essex*, April 13, 2009 (2009-12). Other observers present apparently did not see the bird well enough to identify it, and the extreme rarity of this species in the New World (e.g., Pranty et al. 2004) was surely a factor in its non-acceptance. A single Committee member did endorse the description.

### **Black-tailed Gull (*Larus crassirostris*)**

One reported by a lone observer at Little Nahant, Nahant, *Essex*, on October 18, 2007 (2007-43), was contentious for the Committee, requiring three rounds before a final decision in which only one member voted to accept the record. The observer described a medium-sized gull with a dark gray mantle, yellow legs, yellow bill with a black ring and red "lipstick" at the tip, and a white tail with a black terminal band. However, the view was brief and the bird was not relocated. Because of the extreme rarity of the species (there are only two Massachusetts records), the Committee members held this report to a very high standard. Although no plumage of a Lesser Black-backed Gull should combine a solidly gray mantle without brown and a black subterminal band, some Committee members expressed concern that the described field marks did not comprehensively eliminate that species.

### **Thayer's Gull (*Larus thayeri*)**

Identification of Thayer's Gull is extremely difficult and subject to interpretation, especially because "Kumlien's" Iceland Gull is so variable and can cause confusion. For this reason, the Committee did not accept two records that were submitted without photos, single first-winters at Eastern Point, Gloucester, *Essex*, January 13, 2009 (2009-13), and January 18, 2009 (2009-14).

### **South Polar Skua (*Stercorarius maccormicki*)**

Not only is separation of South Polar Skua from Great Skua (*Stercorarius skua*) one of the most serious field identification challenges in New England, but also young Pomarine Jaegers (*Stercorarius pomarinus*) have been mistaken for skuas with regularity, even by experienced birders. The description of this bird from Stellwagen Bank, off Provincetown, *Barnstable*, October 3, 2007 (2007-38), left eight members unconvinced that it might not be either a Great Skua or a Pomarine Jaeger. Furthermore, several members noted that October would be remarkably late for a South Polar Skua.

### **Northern Hawk Owl (*Surnia ulula*)**

The Committee received photographs showing a Northern Hawk Owl that was reported to have been in a yard in Millbury, *Worcester*, late in the evening on February 7, 2008, and again early in the morning of February 8, 2008 (2008-07). Multiple observers present on the latter date failed to relocate the bird. Although there was no doubt that the photos submitted showed a Northern Hawk Owl, certain aspects of both the written and photographic documentation prompted a follow-up with the original observer. The observer ultimately conceded that one of the photographs had been taken in Canada years prior but was nonetheless submitted as documentation for a sighting from Millbury. Although the observer apologized for the dishonest report, the Committee was left with too many questions to endorse this single-observer sighting, and it failed unanimously.

### **MacGillivray's Warbler (*Oporornis tolmei*)**

A MacGillivray's Warbler reported from Dunback Meadow, Lexington, *Middlesex*, September 6, 2008 (2008-24), was very nearly accepted, garnering support from six of nine members on its third round. Although views were brief, the observer described the distinctive smacking call note, broad eye arcs above and below the eye, and gray head color extending to the throat. The three members with reservations noted that despite the 14 records in Massachusetts, MacGillivray's remains a very rare bird on the East coast with just eight records outside of Massachusetts, most in October to December. The brief views (of only two seconds), which did not allow study of tail length or underside, were also mentioned by the three dissenters, although all acknowledged that the experienced observer and details provided strongly suggested a correct identification.

### **Hoary Redpoll (*Acanthis hornemanni*)**

Separation of Hoary Redpoll from Common Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*) is to be approached with extreme caution. Although photos accompanied a report from Cummington, *Hampshire*, on January 5, 2008 (2008-08), and although the sighting occurred during a known flight year when other Hoaries were present in the state, the Committee erred on the conservative side, with three members voting not to accept. Given the largish bill, some felt the bird in the photos was more likely a pale Common Redpoll. Six members felt strongly that the identification was correct, illustrating just how difficult this identification can be, particularly when the images do not show the bird from a sufficient range of angles. Especially important to capture is undertail-covert pattern, bill shape from multiple points of view, back color, and breast and flank pattern. 

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**Matthew Garvey** is an attorney for The TJX Companies, Inc., where he manages the company's information privacy program. An avid birder since a childhood spent in New York City and Cape May, he now lives in Brookline with his wife, son, and dog. Mat, a member of the Brookline Conservation Commission, is Secretary of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee. **Marshall Iliff**, who has been birding for more than two-thirds of his life, moved to Massachusetts in 2006. He works for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology as a project leader for its flagship eBird project, which now collects almost 2 million bird observations per month from across the hemisphere. Marshall has served on the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee since 2009 and was elected chair in 2010.

# ABOUT BOOKS

D. I. Y.

*Mark Lynch*

**Avian Awakening: Discovering the Birds of New England.** Bruce deGraaf. 2009. Published by Blurb.com

The whole punk ethic was do-it-yourself, and I've been very literal, especially as a kid. When they said that anybody can do this, I was like, "OK, that's me." Michael Stipe, lead singer for R.E.M.

I have been working on a book for about six years. I will not say what it is about other than it is about birds.\* No author willfully discloses what his or her book-in-the-works is about for fear that some other unscrupulous author might steal the idea and beat him or her to the publishing punch. It does happen. My project seems never ending, as pages keep piling up (well, at least taking up space on my hard drive), and the end is still nowhere in sight. It is painful to realize that I made the greatest headway in writing my book while laid up with a broken leg. Procrastination has become my mantra but, truthfully, it is the thought of dealing with a publisher that really slows me down. I deal with publishers and publicists all the time through my radio show on which I interview authors of books on art, science, and history. I also get an earful from the authors themselves on how they are treated by *some* publishers. The most generous thing I can say is that it is a crazy business.

I have friends who are published and many more who have tried to get published. The process of shopping your book around to a major commercial publisher is not unlike trying to get in to an Ivy League school with a 2.5 GPA. You quickly collect quite a pile of rejection notices, and even if you do miraculously win the lottery and find a commercial publisher, you are likely to then be brutally edited and finally get promoted by publicists who may not really understand your book. The process can be depressing and demeaning. If, instead, you get your book released by one of the many "academic presses," you will find you are really on your own. There will be little or no publicity; if you are lucky, your book might be shown with twenty others in a group ad in the *New York Review of Books*. Most bookstores will not carry your book, and there will be no coveted book tours. Typically, many of the books published by academic presses vanish from sight having never found the audience they deserve. Authors lucky enough to have found a caring publisher and an editor they can work with enjoy a relationship as rare and as cherished as a long, loving marriage.

Bruce deGraaf is a birder and photographer who lives in central Massachusetts. Users of Massbird are familiar with his photographs of his birding adventures that he generously shares through his website. Recently, when he told me he had a book of his photographs coming out, I was frankly surprised. Not because his photographs were not worthy to be published (they are), but large format, coffee table books of

bird photography are about the last thing most publisher is thinking of putting out now. There are already too many of them and they are expensive to print; they are doomed to be remaindered. I wondered how Bruce lucked out. Who did he know in the publishing biz? When he told me it was a self-published volume, my expectations sank. I believed at that time that most self-published books looked second-rate: the quality of the paper was often substandard, and the reproduction quality of the photographs poor. Most self-published books that I had seen in the last decade looked and felt...like self-published books. So I was pleasantly shocked when I saw Bruce's finished *Avian Awakening: Discovering the Birds of New England*, a large-format, glossy collection of beautiful photographs, wonderfully laid out and printed on high-grade paper. It did not look like any self-published book I had ever seen.



Bruce had done all his work on Blurb.com <<http://www.blurb.com>>, one of several new state-of-the-art, self-publishing businesses on the web. Blurb.com specializes in books of photographs or artwork. Services like Blurb let you decide everything about the look and content of your book, including the format. (In addition to the large format, Bruce also has published *Avian Awakenings* in smaller hardbound and soft-cover versions, each differently priced.) You do the layout. You choose the binding and quality of paper as well as the press run. Do you want just one or a thousand? Every step of production is determined by what you want it to look like and how much you want to invest. Of course, services like Blurb charge a fee, but you determine how much to charge for your book beyond the fee. In other words, you determine your profit margin. The point is: if you are willing to pay for it, you can now self-publish your book and have it look professional.

*Avian Awakenings* is a wonderfully personal look at the birds of New England. Each chapter documents deGraaf's expanding world of experience with the birds of New England, beginning with photographs of the species that come to his backyard. He next explores the habitats of his town, then visits some of the prime birding locations of central New England, like Sterling Peat or the Westborough Wildlife Management Area. The final chapters are devoted to such well-known birding locations as Mount Auburn Cemetery, Plum Island, and Cape Cod, as well as his forays in pursuit of certain rarities, like the Townsend's Warbler in Cambridge in the winter of 2007 or the Northern Hawk Owl in Center Harbor, New Hampshire, in February 2009.

The photography is top-notch, often showing the birds in action. A two-page spread of a gray-phase Eastern Screech Owl in Mount Auburn also meticulously captures the grain of the wood and bark surrounding the roosting owl and underscores the value of seeing many of Bruce's photographs in a large format. He often documents a single bird over several shots and pages; a wonderful multi-image, two-page layout records Bruce's morning spent with a Least Bittern at Plum Island. I particularly enjoyed his photographs from Central Massachusetts, whose avian treasures have been rarely celebrated in a book of this quality. Each chapter of *Avian Awakening* begins with a few paragraphs by deGraaf on why he enjoys that locality.

This is truly a visual and written diary of the author's birding exploration of Massachusetts.

When I interviewed Bruce on *Inquiry*, I asked him why there were no chapters on the Berkshires, my favorite place to bird. He replied that he just hasn't gotten there yet, but that future versions of *Avian Awakenings* could contain photographs from there or different shots from other locations already covered in the book. With online self-publishing, a book is no longer a static object. You can edit or update your book every day if you wish, adding material, subtracting shots, and printing new versions every month or year if you want to spend the money. It is all up to you and your wallet.

Although self-publishing has reached the stage where producing a quality book of bird photography or artwork is within the reach of many, the challenges are still sobering. One *has* to know something about layout. You may have stunning shots, but if they are poorly arranged, the work will suffer. In self-publishing, you are also your own editor, and from personal experience I can tell you that, while that may seem like the best of all possible worlds, it usually is not. I know I need an editor, though it took me a while to admit that to myself. My hunch is that most people could benefit from an editor; so please get other people to read your text before getting it published. Above all, you need to have something to say and show; the quality of the work is everything in self-publishing. Nothing is more embarrassing or utterly useless than a big book of glossy substandard photography. If the shot doesn't look great in a small format, then it will only look worse when enlarged.

Also, be very clear about what you are trying to accomplish. Are you just putting out a few vanity volumes for end-of-the-year presents to family and friends? Or do you want the general public to read your book and perhaps even review it? The moment in self-publishing where you'll realize just how on your own you are is when you have a stack of them in your office rapidly gathering dust, and it dawns on you: now what? How do you get them distributed? How do you sell them and hopefully recoup some of your investment? Sites like Blurb will offer your book in their on-line stores, but it's tough to get noticed among the large number of titles already offered there. They do have a section of "Staff Picks," and books are also arranged according to categories, so an effort is made on their part to get your book seen. But how many birders go to an on-line self-publishing site to look for their next purchase? You will need to self-promote your book, give talks at sanctuaries, rent a booth at birding fairs, etc. It's a prescription for failure if you are unprepared to devote the time and effort required.

So your dream of publishing the *Birds of Old Furnace, Massachusetts* can easily be a reality if you have the money, the talent, the editing skills, and some idea of how to market it to the birding public. There can be little doubt that, with quality projects like *Avian Awakenings* coming out more often, the time for self-publishing has arrived, and it is going to be fascinating to see what crazy and unexpected books birders will create when given a free rein.

(\*No, it's not *Bird Fast, Die Young, Leave a Long Life List*, my much anticipated book that will "finally rip the lid off New England birding," naming names, and showing the digiscoped pictures to prove it. This tell-all scorcher is set to be published only after I die or move to California, whichever comes first. It will make Bill Oddie's classic *Little Black Bird Book* look like *That Quail Robert.*) 🐦

### **Official Number of Protected Migratory Bird Species Climbs to More than 1000**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced revisions to the list of bird species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Species appearing on this list are governed under migratory bird hunting and permitting regulations concerning most aspects of possession, transportation, sale, purchase, exportation, and importation of protected species. The list, last updated in 1985, incorporates the latest taxonomic and scientific data for migratory birds. The changes include 186 new additions and 11 subtractions, bringing the total number of species protected under the MBTA to 1007.

The Service is the primary federal agency responsible for managing migratory birds. Federal migratory bird regulations, including the list, implement the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which in turn implements treaties with Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia. All species included on the list are considered federally protected and governed by federal regulations limiting take (from the wild), possession, and other use.

The newly revised list reflects the addition of species based on new evidence of their occurrence in the United States or its territories. The revisions also remove species no longer known to occur within the United States and change some names to conform to accepted usages.

The changes also reflect taxonomic revisions to the bird taxa of North America published by the American Ornithologists' Union, and changes in the Migratory Bird List incorporate name changes and revisions, moving some species from one taxon to another.

The final rule can be found online at <<http://migratorybirds.fws.gov>>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. They are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for their scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on their work and the people who make it happen, visit <<http://www.fws.gov>>.

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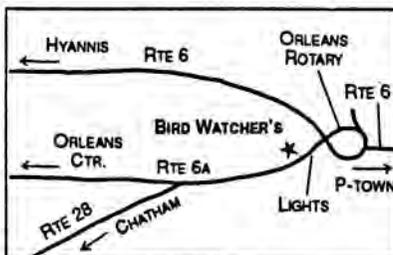
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# BIRD SIGHTINGS

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November/December 2009

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

November was very warm, reversing the abnormally chilly October. The average temperature in Boston was 48.9°, 4° warmer than is typical. The high temperature reached 69° on November 10, and the low was 35° on November 7. Rainfall totaled 3.34 inches in Boston, almost an inch below average, and snowfall was absent throughout the state.

December started very warm with a reading of 69° degrees on December 3, which broke the record for that day, topping 65° in 1932. The typical first freeze in the Boston area is on November 4, but this year the temperature did not dip to 32° until December 6, making it the latest first freeze for Boston in over 137 years of record keeping. A few miles inland, away from the warming influence of the ocean, frost occurred as early as October 20. The average temperature for December was 33.2°, 1.6° below normal. Rainfall measured 3.91 inches, just a bit above normal. Snowfall totaled 15.2 inches, 7.2 inches above average. Every weekend day of the CBC period had some precipitation, resulting in postponements and even cancellations.

*R. Stymeist*

## WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

A **Common Shelduck**, discovered on December 6 in Nahant, was spotted again the following day but then defied further discovery despite the efforts of many searchers. This species is one that is kept in captivity, and no sighting has been accepted by the American Ornithologists Union. Jeremiah Trimble, however, commented “. . . this species has been on the radars of many birding folks as a potential true vagrant to northeastern North America. In addition, this species has increased dramatically over the last decade in Iceland, a good jumping off point to North America. Most significantly, only 2 weeks ago, an immature male Common Shelduck was observed and photographed at Quidi Vidi Lake in St. John’s Newfoundland. At a good location for an arriving vagrant and at a good time of year, this bird was considered by many folks there to be a natural vagrant.”

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** visited a field in Sharon for the third year in a row. **Cackling Geese** have become regular fall visitors, particularly at Turners Falls in Montague, but this season they were well represented in the eastern part of the state as well. Two **Tundra Swans** were discovered at Bartlett’s Farm on Nantucket on December 12 but eluded other searchers until they were rediscovered on December 26. Northern Shovelers were well reported, with an impressive 33 at Plum Island and 21 in Swampscott. A **Common Teal** was discovered at the same Newton location where one had loitered from January through June this year and was almost surely the same bird. A male **Tufted Duck** in Seekonk was a rare treat in December. On November 3 and 4 there was an impressive influx of Black Scoters at a number of inland locations, including several flocks numbering in the hundreds. These incursions of Black Scoters are annual, often occurring in two waves, the first in late October and the second in early November. The other two scoter species and Long-tailed Ducks were also discovered at inland ponds in early November.

There was a good movement of Red-throated Loons in November. Rick Heil has been doing sea watches at Andrew’s Point in Rockport for many years, and on December 9 he reported, “Finally an intense storm with strong Easterly winds, really the only one of the

season. The result was an excellent seabird parade past the point including two new late dates for Sooty and Manx Shearwaters, and a near record high count for Northern Fulmar.” At Race Point in Provincetown Blair Nikula was also doing regular sea watches, and on November 18 he said, “The consistency with which seabirds have been viewable from shore in P’town this year, regardless of the weather conditions, has been unprecedented in my lifetime.” During this period all four common species of shearwater were reported, including unusual late November reports of Cory’s Shearwater, and December reports for Greater, Sooty, and Manx shearwaters.

A **Wood Stork** was photographed in Duxbury on November 3, the first occurrence of this very rare vagrant since 2003. Sheffield, in the western part of the state, continues to be the Black Vulture capitol of the state, with double-digit numbers routinely reported. Two Ospreys lingered into December in Pepperell and New Braintree. Scott Sumner received a call on December 12 reporting a hawk in distress nearby, but he recommended the caller wait, saying it may have struck a window and become stunned. When it was still there at 7:00 p.m., he went and captured the bird in the dark. Scott was stunned to get home to discover it was a Broad-winged Hawk. He took it to a wildlife rehabilitator, but it died the next day. Although it was blind in one eye, the rehabber said it was a recent injury, and it was a mystery why this bird lingered so late. This species is very rare after October, and there are no previous December records.

Although it is a breeder in Massachusetts, **Common Moorhen** is very unusual, particularly in November, so it was noteworthy that an individual lingered at Eastern Point in Gloucester through the end of the month. **Sandhill Cranes** have been occurring more often in recent years, but a group of three in Wilmington on December 2 was unusual for the month.

Shorebirds that lingered beyond their typical departure dates included a Semipalmated Plover seen on the Cape Cod CBC on December 30, a “Western” Willet in Orleans on December 28, and two Stilt Sandpipers on Plum Island on November 5.

**Mew Gulls** were photographed at two locations. For the second year in a row, multiple **Thayer’s Gulls** were found and photographed at Eastern Point in Gloucester. Both gulls are tricky to identify, so photography is often the best documentation. Pomarine Jaegers were well reported from sea watch locations earlier mentioned, as well as at First Encounter Beach in Eastham and in Orleans. Parasitic Jaegers were reported only from Provincetown, but consistently through November 14.

Alcids were very well reported during this period, again most notably from the two sea watch sites commented upon earlier. Many birders prize the sightings of pelagic species from the shore, and this underscores the value of consistent coverage of a good location. Most impressive was the December 28 sighting of 10,700 large alcid species from Provincetown.

*M. W. Rines*

<b>Common Shelduck</b>				11/28	Dudley	1 imm	M. Lynch#		
12/06-07	Nahant	1	1W ph	J. Malone + v.o.	12/15	WBWS	25	M. Faherty	
<b>Greater White-fronted Goose</b>					<b>Cackling Goose</b>				
thr	Sharon	1		W. Sweet + v.o.	11/1	Concord	1	J. Forbes	
Snow Goose					11/1-16	Ipswich	7-8	J. Berry + v.o.	
11/1	Ipswich	5		N. Hayward	11/5-29	Turners Falls	1	J. P. Smith	
11/29	Sheffield	126		J. Drucker	11/7-10	P.I.	7	T. Wetmore#	
12/6	P.I.	5		S. Sullivan					
12/17	Hadley	5		H. Allen	<b>Mute Swan</b>	11/1	Acoaxet	99	M. Lynch#
12/27	Bridgewater	2		K. Anderson	11/3	Ipswich	19	J. Berry	
Brant					11/7	Plymouth	28	I. Davies#	
11/2	Sharon	16		V. Zollo	11/15	Westboro	30	M. Lynch#	
11/9	Swansea	350		J. Sweeney	11/29	Turners Falls	40	H. Allen	
11/15	Boston H.	980		TASL (M. Hall)	12/1	Pepperell	36	T. Pirro	
11/15	Plymouth B.	136		P. Peterson	12/5-6	Cape Cod	259	CC Pond Survey	
11/18	Nantucket	250		S. Perkins#					

<b>Tundra Swan</b>				11/29-12/31	Nantucket	12 max	v.o.
12/15-31	Nantucket	2 ad	V. Laux + v.o.	12/4	Falmouth	2	M. Keleher
<b>Wood Duck</b>				12/6	Brewster	2	B. Nikula
11/1	Randolph	20	P. Peterson	12/12	Marlboro	1 m	M. Lynch#
11/2	Holyoke	36	B. Staron	<b>Redhead</b>			
11/9	GMNWR	336	W. Hutcheson	11/1-12/4	Falmouth	1	P. Brown
11/15	Southboro	34	M. Lynch#	12/12	Marlboro	1 m	M. Lynch#
12/24	Wayland	18	B. Harris	12/24	Nantucket	8	W. Hutcheson
<b>Gadwall</b>				<b>Ring-necked Duck</b>			
thr	P.I.	200 max	v.o.	11/thr	Cambr. (F.P.)	125 max	v.o.
11/7	Plymouth	118	I. Davies#	11/1-12/13	Randolph	340 max	v.o.
11/12	N. Quabbin	3	C. Ellison	11/8	Pittsfield	500	T. Gagnon
11/15	Plymouth	65	G. d'Entremont#	11/8	W. Newbury	477	F. Vale#
11/22	Fairhaven	34	G. d'Entremont	11/15	Southboro	1325	M. Lynch#
12/5-6	Cape Cod	132	CC Pond Survey	12/5-6	Cape Cod	417	CC Pond Survey
12/19	E. Gloucester	28	R. Heil	<b>Tufted Duck</b>			
12/27	Greenfield	2	Greenfield CBC	12/3-7	Seekonk	1 m ph	J. Sullivan + v.o.
<b>Eurasian Wigeon</b>				<b>Greater Scaup</b>			
11/thr	Marstons Mills	1	v.o.	11/1-12/18	P.I.	60 max	v.o.
11/7	Plymouth	3 m	I. Davies#	11/15	Lakeville	44	SSBC (J. Sweeney)
12/5-6	Cape Cod	4	CC Pond Survey	11/15	Boston H.	578	TASL (M. Hall)
12/15	Nantucket	1 m	V. Laux#	11/22	Fairhaven	69	G. d'Entremont
<b>American Wigeon</b>				11/22	Acoaxet	48	E. Nielsen
11/thr	Nantucket	75 max	K. Blackshaw	11/29	P'town	110	J. Young
11/thr	P.I.	81	v.o.	12/5	Falmouth	400+	S. Wheelock
11/7	Plymouth	95	I. Davies#	12/10	Mattapoisett	60	M. Bornstein#
12/5-6	Cape Cod	185	CC Pond Survey	12/12	N. Truro	50	J. Young#
12/7	GMNWR	11	A. Bragg#	12/26	Nahant	55	L. Pivacek
12/12	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	<b>Lesser Scaup</b>			
<b>American Black Duck</b>				11/1	Quabbin Pk	3	S. Surner
thr	P.I.	800 max	v.o.	11/7	Plymouth	13	I. Davies#
11/1	Acoaxet	112	M. Lynch#	11/14	P.I.	18	C. Caron
11/7	Plymouth	124	I. Davies#	11/15	Lakeville	20	SSBC (J. Sweeney)
11/15	Boston H.	276	TASL (M. Hall)	12/4	Falmouth	130	M. Keleher
12/5-6	Cape Cod	938	CC Pond Survey	12/13	Randolph	18	V. Zollo
12/27	Nantucket	100	K. Blackshaw#	12/24	Nantucket	25	W. Hutcheson
<b>Blue-winged Teal</b>				12/26	Nahant	80	L. Pivacek
11/1	GMNWR	2	J. Forbes#	<b>Scaup species</b>			
11/8	New Marlboro	1	M. Lynch#	12/5-6	Cape Cod	1752	CC Pond Survey
11/12	N. Quabbin	2	C. Ellison	<b>King Eider</b>			
<b>Northern Shoveler</b>				11/15	Sandwich	1	B. Bushnell
11/1	Boston (F.Pk)	3	R. Mayer	11/19-12/6	Gloucester	1 m	v.o.
11/1-12/8	P.I.	33 max	v.o.	12/13	Sandwich	1 ph	J. Kricher
11/21	Waltham	2	J. Forbes#	12/24-27	Nahant	1	J. Malone + v.o.
11/21	E. Boston	6	MAS (D. Larson)	12/28-31	P.I.	1 m 1W	J. Nance#
12/thr	Woburn (HP)	1 f	M. Rines	<b>Common Eider</b>			
12/5	Cambridge	6	F. Bouchard	thr	P.I.	700	v.o.
12/8	Longmeadow	1	N. Eaton	11/1	Chatham	3500	B. Nikula
12/8	Swampscott	21	P. + F. Vale#	11/15	Boston H.	6142	TASL (M. Hall)
12/21	Jamaica Plain	4	T. Bradford	11/21	Marion	600	J. Sweeney
12/30	Chatham	1	(CBC) B. Nikula	11/22	Acoaxet	800	E. Nielsen
<b>Northern Pintail</b>				11/26	E. Gloucester	325+	R. Heil
11/thr	P.I.	130 max	v.o.	12/18	Bourne	300+	C. Buckley
11/2	GMNWR	11	A. Bragg#	12/24	Nantucket	445	W. Hutcheson
11/22	Acoaxet	5	E. Nielsen	<b>Harlequin Duck</b>			
12/5-6	Cape Cod	13	CC Pond Survey	thr	Sandwich	3-4	v.o.
12/19	Agawam	2	CBC (S. Svec)	thr	Rockport	86 max	v.o.
12/27	Southwick	2	CBC (R. Buhner)	11/1	Acoaxet	7	M. Lynch#
12/31	P'town H.	2	B. Nikula	11/21	E. Orleans	8	B. Nikula#
12/31	Duxbury	1 m	R. Bowes	11/29	Nantucket	4	K. Blackshaw#
<b>Green-winged Teal</b>				12/4	Scituate	40	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
11/1-12/7	GMNWR	225 max	v.o.	12/26	Manomet	4	M. Faherty
11/1-12/15	P.I.	60 max	v.o.	12/31	P'town H.	1	B. Nikula
11/1	Westport	26	M. Lynch#	<b>Surf Scoter</b>			
11/3	Ipswich	30	P. Peterson	11/1	Westport	30	M. Lynch#
11/13	Concord	150	S. Perkins#	11/4	Wachusett Res.	3 m	M. Iliff
12/5	Cambridge	16	F. Bouchard	11/12	N. Quabbin	3	C. Ellison
12/11	Marstons Mills	11	M. Keleher	11/15	Boston H.	959	TASL (M. Hall)
12/30	Salisbury	19	S. McGrath	11/15	Rockport (A.P.)	70	R. Heil
<b>Eurasian Green-winged Teal</b>				11/28	Nahant	72	L. Pivacek
12/15-31	Newton	1	v.o.	12/31	Nant. Sound	18000	G. d'Entremont#
<b>Canvasback</b>				<b>White-winged Scoter</b>			
11/1-12/25	Cambr. (F.P.)	24 max	v.o.	thr	P.I.	500 max	v.o.

<b>White-winged Scoter (continued)</b>				<b>Red-breasted Merganser</b>			
thr	Quabbin Pk	1-2	v.o.	11/8	Fairhaven	240	BBC (R. Stymeist)
11/2	Sharon	2 f	V. Zollo	11/10	P.I.	300	T. Wetmore
11/4	Wachusett Res.	4	M. Iliff	11/14	Stockbridge	3	N. Kotovich
11/8	P'town	450	B. Nikula	11/14	Dennis	95	P. Flood
11/14	Stockbridge	1	N. Kotovich	11/15	Plymouth B.	50	P. Peterson
11/15	Boston H.	1705	TASL (M. Hall)	11/15	Boston H.	1161	TASL (M. Hall)
11/30	Wellfleet	145	M. Faherty	11/18	P'town	1700	B. Nikula
12/13	W. Gloucester	200	J. Nelson	11/19	Duxbury B.	150	R. Bowes
12/31	Nant. Sound	7000	G. d'Entremont#	11/21	Marion	90	J. Sweeney
<b>Black Scoter</b>				12/6	Saugus	50	S. Zende#
thr	P.I.	350 max	v.o.	<b>Ruddy Duck</b>			
11/3-4	Reports of 18-916 indiv. from 11 inland loc.			11/1	Randolph	60	P. Peterson
11/7	Eastham	80	B. Zajda#	11/7	W. Newbury	177	F. Vale#
11/12	N. Quabbin	4	C. Ellison	11/8	Canton	304	V. Zollo
11/15	Boston H.	17	TASL (M. Hall)	11/15	Marlboro	329	M. Lynch#
11/26	E. Gloucester	50	R. Heil	11/15	Southboro	64	M. Lynch#
11/30	Wellfleet	23	M. Faherty	12/2	Stoneham	52	D. + I. Jewell
12/31	Nant. Sound	1000	G. d'Entremont#	12/6	Brewster	52	B. Nikula
<b>Long-tailed Duck</b>				12/13	Chestnut Hill	55	F. Bouchard
thr	P.I.	107 max	v.o.	<b>Northern Bobwhite</b>			
11/1-8	Reports of 1-45 indiv. from 9 inland loc.			12/8	WBWS	6	M. Faherty
11/14	Dennis	420	P. Flood	<b>Ring-necked Pheasant</b>			
11/15	Boston H.	254	TASL (M. Hall)	11/7	Cumb. Farms	3	N. Paulson
11/15	Rockport (A.P.)	470	R. Heil	11/21	Nahant	1	MAS (D. Larson)
11/18	Nantucket	100,000+	S. Perkins#	11/22	Gloucester	1 m	B. Harris#
11/18-12/8	Reports of 1-6 indiv. from 8 inland loc.			12/6	Saugus	1	S. Zende#
<b>Bufflehead</b>				<b>Ruffed Grouse</b>			
thr	P.I.	61 max	v.o.	11/7	Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#
11/4	Wachusett Res.	23	M. Iliff	12/8	Quabbin (G5)	2	C. Ellison
11/9	Swansea	160	J. Sweeney	12/30	E. Sandwich	4	D. Manchester
11/15	Boston H.	1829	TASL (M. Hall)	<b>Wild Turkey</b>			
11/22	Acoaxet	66	E. Nielsen	11/1	Quabbin Pk	12	S. Surner
12/5-6	Cape Cod	1900	CC Pond Survey	11/15	Plymouth	10	G. d'Entremont#
12/12	Gloucester	105+	P. + F. Vale	11/15	Mashpee	11	M. Keleher
12/24	Nantucket	418	W. Hutcheson	11/22	Salisbury	20	P. + F. Vale
12/31	Nahant	240	L. Pivacek	12/13	W. Gloucester	20	J. Nelson
<b>Common Goldeneye</b>				<b>Red-throated Loon</b>			
thr	P.I.	450 max	v.o.	thr	P.I.	900 max	v.o.
11/thr	Randolph	21 max	v.o.	11/8, 12/28	P'town	125, 28	B. Nikula
11/15	Southboro	47	M. Lynch#	11/14	Dennis	680	P. Flood
11/15	Boston H.	102	TASL (M. Hall)	11/14	Eastham (F.E.)	380	B. Nikula
12/1	Turners Falls	80	H. Allen	11/15, 12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	374, 23	R. Heil
12/5-6	Cape Cod	92	CC Pond Survey	11/15	Boston H.	244	TASL (M. Hall)
12/16	Gloucester (B.R.)	35	MAS (B. Gette)	11/23	Nantucket	250	W. Hutcheson
12/19	Halifax	24	E. Dalton	11/29	Truro	155	J. Young
12/24	Nantucket	57	W. Hutcheson	11/30	Wellfleet	185	M. Faherty
<b>Barrow's Goldeneye</b>				<b>Common Loon</b>			
11/7	Southboro	1 m	J. Young#	thr	P.I.	60 max	v.o.
11/28-12/15	Wellfleet	1	v.o.	11/1	Westport	33	M. Lynch#
11/29-12/1	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen	11/8, 12/28	P'town	25, 27	B. Nikula
12/8	Essex	1 m ph	D. Jones	11/15	Boston H.	90	TASL (M. Hall)
12/9	Mattapoisett	1 m	M. LaBossiere	11/15	Rockport (A.P.)	44	R. Heil
12/24	Wayland	3	B. Harris	11/16	E. Quabbin	26	L. Therrien
12/25	P.I.	1	M. Bornstein#	11/30	Wellfleet	22	M. Faherty
<b>Hooded Merganser</b>				12/21	Eastham (F.E.)	16	B. Nikula
11/7	Ipswich	85	F. Vale#	12/31	Nant. Sound	50	G. d'Entremont#
11/8	Randolph	52	V. Zollo	<b>Pied-billed Grebe</b>			
12/4	Wareham	40	B. Conway	11/1-12/10	Melrose	3 max	D. + I. Jewell
12/5	Waltham	35	J. Forbes#	11/1-12/10	GMNWR	3 max	v.o.
12/5-6	Cape Cod	745	CC Pond Survey	11/1	Milton (BH)	10	SSBC (V. Zollo)
12/21	Medford	45	R. LaFontaine	11/1	Acoaxet	7	M. Lynch#
12/22	Jamaica Plain	30	M. Barber	11/2	Holyoke	3	B. Staron
<b>Common Merganser</b>				11/5	Groveland	4	J. Berry
11/8	Pittsfield (Pont.)	120	T. Gagnon	11/7	Plymouth	5	I. Davies#
11/13	Peabody	40	P. + F. Vale	11/8	Winchester	3	R. LaFontaine
11/20	Wakefield	130+	P. + F. Vale	12/5-6	Cape Cod	46	CC Pond Survey
11/26	W. Brookfield	226	M. Lynch#	12/6-31	Reports of indiv. from 9 locations		
12/5-6	Cape Cod	117	CC Pond Survey	12/13	Nantucket	7	K. Blackshaw#
12/13	Randolph	107	V. Zollo	<b>Horned Grebe</b>			
12/15	Stoneham	92	D. + I. Jewell	thr	P.I.	25 max	v.o.
12/20	Medford	84	R. LaFontaine	11/8	Fairhaven	118	BBC (R. Stymeist)
				11/9, 12/28	S. Quabbin	16, 26	L. Therrien

Horned Grebe (continued)				11/18	Nantucket	9 migr	S. Perkins#
11/15	Boston H.	403	TASL (M. Hall)	11/19	Duxbury B.	13	R. Bowes
11/29	Quincy H.	106	G. d'Entremont#	12/6	Saugus	7	P. Zende#
12/2	Centerville	55	A. Curtis	12/14	Bourne	5	M. Keleher
12/28	Marblehead	26	R. Hofland	12/19	Chicopee	2	CBC (T. Swochak)
Red-necked Grebe				Great Egret			
thr	P.I.	85 max	v.o.	11/1	Westport	5	M. Lynch#
11/1	Holyoke	8	B. Staron	11/1	Bourne	1	P. Brown
11/15	Stockbridge	7	M. Iliff	11/3	P.I.	9	T. Wetmore
11/15	Boston H.	20	TASL (M. Hall)	11/9	Swansea	1	J. Sweeney
11/21	Dennis	20	E. Hoopes	11/15	E. Boston (B.I.)	1	R. Stymeist
12/1	Winthrop B.	30	P. + F. Vale	Snowy Egret			
12/13	Wellfleet	30	J. Young#	11/3	Marion	1	J. Davis
Northern Fulmar				Cattle Egret			
11/13, 12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	11, 816	R. Heil	11/18-26	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw
11/24	P'town	1	B. Nikula	Black-crowned Night-Heron			
11/27	Eastham (F.E.)	4	B. Nikula	11/3, 12/3	Gloucester (E.P.)	7, 1	Heil, Peterson
12/31	Stellwagen CBC	2	CBC (W. Petersen)	11/5	Eastham (F.H.)	6	M. Faherty
Cory's Shearwater				11/26	Nantucket	1 imm	W. Hutcheson
11/1	N. Truro	1	B. Nikula	<b>Wood Stork</b> (details submitted) *			
11/1, 7	P'town	4, 1	B. Nikula	11/3	Duxbury	1 ph	J. Carnuccio
11/11	P.I.	5	T. Spahr	Black Vulture			
11/15	Rockport (A.P.)	1	R. Heil	11/26	Sheffield	15	J. Drucker
11/27	Eastham (F.E.)	5	B. Nikula	12/27	Southwick	1	CBC (S. Svec)
Greater Shearwater				12/30	Brewster	1	(CBC) J. Kenneally
11/1-12/9	P'town	2170 max	11/14 B. Nikula	Turkey Vulture			
11/1-12/12	N. Truro	140 max	11/8 B. Nikula	11/2	Barre Falls	5	Hawkcount (BK)
11/3, 12/9	Rockport	750, 21	R. Heil	11/4	P.I.	5	MAS (B. Gette)
11/11	P.I.	100	T. Spahr	11/7	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	25	P. Champlin
11/22	Gloucester	275	B. Harris#	12/14	Bourne	9	M. Keleher
11/23	Nantucket	1600	W. Hutcheson	Osprey			
11/30	Wellfleet	31	M. Faherty	11/2	Sharon	1 ad	V. Zollo
Sooty Shearwater				11/7	Waltham	1	J. Forbes
11/15, 12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	1, 1	R. Heil	11/9	Eastham	1	E. Hoopes
11/18, 24	P'town	1, 2	B. Nikula	11/12	Quabbin	1	C. Ellison
11/30	Wellfleet	1	M. Faherty	11/15	Cheshire	1	C. Jones
12/6	Eastham (F.E.)	1	B. Nikula	12/8	Pepperell	1 imm	T. Pirro
Manx Shearwater				12/27	New Braintree	1	C. Ellison
11/1, 8	N. Truro	4, 9	B. Nikula	Bald Eagle			
11/1-12/5	P'town	39 max	11/1 B. Nikula	11/12	Quabbin	5	C. Ellison
11/7	Eastham	6	B. Zajda#	12/14	Sturbridge CBC	5	CBC
12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	1	R. Heil	12/19	Athol CBC	8	CBC
Northern Gannet				12/19	Springfield CBC	8	CBC
thr	P'town	1100 max	B. Nikula	12/20	Northampton CBC	9	CBC
11/1-12/14	P.I.	3000 max	v.o.	12/26	Gr. Boston CBC	2 ad	CBC
11/13, 12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	1500, 2510	R. Heil	12/27	Newbypt. CBC	6	CBC
11/14, 12/21	Eastham (F.E.)	800, 215	B. Nikula	12/31	Plymouth H.	2 ad	K. Doyon
11/14	Dennis	1050	P. Flood	Northern Harrier			
11/23	Nantucket	1800	W. Hutcheson	thr	P.I.	12 max	v.o.
11/30	Wellfleet	1100	M. Faherty	thr	Cumb. Farms	10 max	v.o.
Double-crested Cormorant				11/1	Barre Falls	3	Hawkcount (BK)
11/1	Acoaxet	61	M. Lynch#	11/7	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	6	P. Champlin
11/15	Boston H.	182	TASL (M. Hall)	11/8	Tyringham	2	M. Lynch#
11/22	Salisbury	14	C. Caron#	12/2	S. Carver	2	B. Conway
11/28	Nahant	8	L. Pivacek	12/30	Hatfield	2	H. Allen
11/29	Nantucket	8	K. Blackshaw#	Sharp-shinned Hawk			
12/10	Saugus	35	P. Peterson	11/thr	Chatham (MI)	90	Hawkcount (DM)
12/13	P'town H.	6	B. Nikula	11/1-21	Barre Falls	32	Hawkcount (BK)
Great Cormorant				11/1	Barre Falls	16	Hawkcount (BK)
thr	Gloucester	34 max	v.o.	11/1, 8	Melrose (PR)	3, 5	Hawkcount (CJ)
11/3	Rockport	110	R. Heil	11/2	GMNWR	2	A. Bragg#
11/8	Fairhaven	14	BBC (R. Stymeist)	11/7	Eastham (F.H.)	2	I. Davies#
11/8	P'town	50	B. Nikula	12/27	Nantucket	2	K. Blackshaw#
11/15	Boston H.	92	TASL (M. Hall)	Cooper's Hawk			
12/15	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore	11/thr	Chatham (MI)	15	Hawkcount (DM)
12/28	Gloucester	2	P. + F. Vale	11/1	P.I.	4	B. Harris
American Bittern				11/8	Harwichport	2	A. Curtis
11/7-8	P.I.	1	S. Moore# + v.o.	11/8	Saugus (Rumney)	2	S. Zende#
12/14	Sturbridge CBC	1	CBC	11/8	Fairhaven	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)
12/24	Nantucket	2	W. Hutcheson	11/10	Belmont	2	J. Forbes#
Great Blue Heron				11/15	Lakeville	4	SSBC (J. Sweeney)
11/7	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	10	P. Champlin	12/12	Cumb. Farms	2	E. Nielsen
11/16	Wareham	6	J. Sweeney				

Cooper's Hawk (continued)				American Golden-Plover			
12/22	Essex	2	P. Brown	11/1	P'town	1	B. Nikula
Northern Goshawk				11/21	P.I.	2	BBC (J. Center)
11/1, 11	Barre Falls	1, 1	Hawkcount (BK)	Semipalmated Plover			
11/10	Chatham (MI)	1	Hawkcount (DM)	11/1	Scituate	11	I. Davies#
12/10	P.I.	1	J. Smith	11/1-22	P.I.	15 max	T. Wetmore
12/19	Longmeadow	1	CBC (S. Svec)	11/1	Chatham	25	B. Nikula
Red-shouldered Hawk				11/4	Lexington	2	M. Rines
11/thr	E. Middleboro	2	K. Anderson	11/11	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes
11/1-21	Barre Falls	24	Hawkcount (BK)	11/21	Eastham	1	B. Nikula
11/7	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	2	P. Champlin	12/30	E. Orleans	1	CBC (J. Trimble)
11/8, 11	Melrose (PR)	2, 2	Hawkcount (CJ)	Killdeer			
12/22	Plymouth CBC	4	CBC	11/1-12/12	Cumb. Farms	11 max	v.o.
12/27	Marshfield CBC	4	CBC	11/1	Westport	19	M. Lynch#
Broad-winged Hawk				11/1	Concord	62	W. Hutcheson
12/12	Belchertown	1 injured	S. Surner	11/14	Halifax	13	J. Sweeney
Red-tailed Hawk				11/15	Arlington Res.	10	J. Kovner#
11/1-7	Barre Falls	82	Hawkcount (BK)	11/22	Sharon	20	SSBC (V. Zollo)
11/7	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	10	P. Champlin	12/30	E. Orleans	4	CBC (J. Trimble)
11/8	Sheffield	11	M. Lynch#	Spotted Sandpiper			
Rough-legged Hawk				11/1	GMNWR	1	J. Forbes
11/5-12/26	Cumb. Farms	1-2	v.o.	Greater Yellowlegs			
11/22	Saugus (Rumney)	1	S. Zende#	11/1-29	P.I.	46 max	v.o.
12/13-31	P.I.	1-2	v.o.	11/1	Chatham	76	B. Nikula
12/19	Southwick	1	CBC (S. Svec)	11/14	Eastham (F.E.)	8	B. Nikula
12/26	Gr. Boston CBC	2	CBC	11/22	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	4	E. Nielsen
12/30	Deerfield	1	B. Bieda	12/13	Wellfleet	6	J. Young#
Golden Eagle				12/15	WBWS	4	M. Faherty
11/2	Barre Falls	2	Hawkcount (BK)	12/19	New Bedford CBC	2	CBC
11/4-8	Granville	4	J. Weeks	Western Willet			
11/28	P.I.	1 ad	P. + J. Roberts	11/1, 21	Chatham	4, 1	B. Nikula
12/26	Quabbin CBC	1	CBC	12/28	Orleans	1	J. Kenneally
American Kestrel				Lesser Yellowlegs			
11/1	Milton (BH)	2	SSBC (V. Zollo)	11/1	Cumb. Farms	1	E. Dalton#
11/22	Saugus (Rumney)	2	S. Zende#	11/1	P.I.	1	N. Landry
12/7	Cumb. Farms	3	J. Sweeney	11/1	Westport	1	M. Lynch#
12/20	Northampton CBC	3	CBC	11/21	Eastham	1	J. Trimble
12/26	Gr. Boston CBC	6	CBC	Hudsonian Godwit			
Merlin				11/1	Ipswich	1	N. Hayward
thr	Reports of indiv. from 23 locations			11/3-14	P.I.	1	v.o.
11/22	P.I.	3	C. Caron#	Ruddy Turnstone			
Peregrine Falcon				11/15	Boston H.	20	TASL (M. Hall)
thr	P.I.	1-2	v.o.	12/13	P'town H.	5	B. Nikula
11/3	Ipswich	2 imm	J. Berry	12/17	Gloucester (B.R.)	14	R. Heil
12/7	Gloucester	pr	P. Brown	12/27	Mid Cape CBC	42	CBC
12/8	Cambridge	2	G. Dysart	12/27	Nantucket	40	K. Blackshaw#
12/19	Springfield CBC	3	CBC	12/31	P'town H.	2	B. Nikula
12/26	Gr. Boston CBC	5	CBC	Red Knot			
Virginia Rail				11/1	P.I.	1	B. Harris
11/1-29	Wayland	1	B. Harris	11/1	Chatham	140	B. Nikula
11/30	Wellfleet	1	M. Keleher	Sanderling			
12/1	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	thr	P.I.	160 max	v.o.
12/30	E. Orleans	2	CBC (J. Trimble)	11/11, 12/28	Duxbury B. 305, 16		R. Bowes
Sora				11/15	Plymouth B.	140	P. Peterson
11/16	Yarmouth	1	E. Hoopes	11/18	Nantucket	130	S. Perkins#
Common Moorhen				11/29	P'town	110	J. Young
11/9-30	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	P. Brown + v.o.	12/24	Nantucket	173	W. Hutcheson
American Coot				12/27	Mid Cape CBC	523	CBC
thr	GMNWR	38 max	v.o.	12/27	Newbypt. CBC	147	CBC
thr	Jamaica Plain	13 max	v.o.	Least Sandpiper			
thr	Nantucket	40 max	K. Blackshaw#	11/1	Scituate	1	I. Davies#
11/18	Nantucket	35	K. Blackshaw	White-rumped Sandpiper			
12/5-6	Cape Cod	19	CC Pond Survey	11/1-23	P.I.	11 max	v.o.
Sandhill Crane				11/1	Ipswich	20	N. Hayward
12/2	Wilmington	3	J. Beckwith	11/1	Rowley	3 juv	B. Harris
Black-bellied Plover				11/7	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	10	P. Champlin
11/1-14	Cumb. Farms	7 max	v.o.	11/14	Halifax	1	J. Sweeney
11/1-23	P.I.	29 max	v.o.	Pectoral Sandpiper			
11/1	Chatham	310	B. Nikula	11/1	Cumb. Farms	1	E. Dalton#
11/2	Ipswich	15	P. Peterson	11/1	P.I.	1	B. Harris
11/19	Duxbury B.	12	R. Bowes	11/1	Westport	2	M. Lynch#
11/21	Quabbin	2	L. Therrien	11/1	Concord	2	W. Hutcheson
				11/2	Ipswich	1	P. Peterson

Pectoral Sandpiper (continued)				<b>Thayer's Gull</b> (no details) *			
11/15	Pittsfield (Onota)	1	M. Iliff	12/19-25	Gloucester (E.P.)	2 ph	R. Heil + v.o.
<b>Purple Sandpiper</b>				<b>Iceland Gull</b>			
thr	P.I.	25 max	v.o.	thr	Gloucester	32 max	v.o.
thr	Gloucester H.	66 max	v.o.	11/6	P.I.	2 1W	T. Wetmore
thr	Rockport (A.P.)	100 max	v.o.	11/12	Hadley	1	B. Lafley
11/15	Boston H.	23	TASL (M. Hall)	12/14-18	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen
12/4	Scituate	14	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	12/24	Nantucket	40	W. Hutcheson
12/5	Nahant	14	J. Malone	12/28	P'town	5	B. Nikula
12/26	Manomet	9	M. Faherty	12/31	N. Truro	3	B. Nikula
12/31	P'town H.	7	B. Nikula	<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>			
<b>Dunlin</b>				11/8	Turners Falls	2	B. Zajda
thr	Duxbury B.	1386 max	R. Bowes	11/26	E. Gloucester	4	R. Heil
thr	P.I.	1000 max	v.o.	11/29	Nantucket	174	K. Blackshaw#
11/15	Plymouth B.	1200	P. Peterson	12/1	Boston	2	M. Garvey
11/21	Eastham	1200	B. Nikula	12/24	Nantucket	56	W. Hutcheson
12/15	WBWS	220	M. Faherty	<b>Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>			
<b>Stilt Sandpiper</b>				12/13	P'town	1 2W b ph	B. Nikula
11/5	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore	<b>Glaucous Gull</b>			
<b>Long-billed Dowitcher</b>				11/26, 12/19	Gloucester (E.P.)	1, 2	R. Heil
11/1	Chatham	1	B. Nikula	11/28-12/31	P.I.	1 1W	P. + J. Roberts
11/3	P.I.	1	D. Chickering	<b>Nelson's Gull</b>			
11/9	Eastham	1	E. Hoopes	12/25	Gloucester (E.P.)	2	D. Lovitch
<b>Wilson's Snipe</b>				<b>Common Tern</b>			
11/1-12/19	Cumb. Farms	4 max	v.o.	11/1	Plymouth	2 1W	I. Davies#
11/1	E. Boston (B.I.)	2	T. Factor	11/1-22	P'town	125 max 11/7	B. Nikula
11/5	Eastham (F.H.)	2	M. Faherty	11/2	P.I.	1	P. Gilmore#
11/14	Ipswich	3	M. Iliff	11/14, 21	Dennis	56, 8	Flood, Hoopes
12/20	Hatfield	1	CBC (T. Blunt)	11/14	Eastham (F.E.)	2	B. Nikula
<b>American Woodcock</b>				<b>Forster's Tern</b>			
11/7	Ware R. IBA	4	M. Lynch#	11/2	Salisbury	1	T. Factor
11/12	Lenox	1	R. Laubach	11/7	P'town	1	B. Nikula
11/17	Barre Falls	1	B. Kamp#	<b>Pomarine Jaeger</b>			
12/16	Cambr. (Daneyh)	1	R. Stymeist	11/1, 27	P'town	5, 3	B. Nikula
<b>Red Phalarope</b>				11/15, 12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	10, 55	R. Heil
12/6	Eastham (F.E.)	6	B. Nikula	11/26	Gloucester (E.P.)	1 dk	R. Heil
<b>Black-legged Kittiwake</b>				11/27, 12/6	Eastham (F.E.)	35, 21	B. Nikula
thr	P'town	1125 max	B. Nikula	11/28	Orleans	25	B. Nikula
11/14	Eastham (F.E.)	96	B. Nikula	<b>Parasitic Jaeger</b>			
11/29	Wellfleet	275	M. Faherty	11/1, 8	P'town	3, 4	B. Nikula
12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	2425	R. Heil	11/11, 14	P'town	4, 2	B. Nikula
12/10	Eastham (F.E.)	325	B. Nikula	<b>Dovekie</b>			
12/12	N. Truro	100	J. Young#	11/22, 12/28	N. Truro	3, 2	B. Nikula
<b>Bonaparte's Gull</b>				11/22, 12/28	P'town	24, 15	B. Nikula
thr	P.I.	75 max	v.o.	11/28	Manomet	3	G. d'Entremont
11/1-22	P'town	1500 max	v.o.	12/9, 28	Rockport (A.P.)	29, 8	R. Heil
11/7	S. Quabbin	1	L. Therrien	12/10	Eastham (F.E.)	1	B. Nikula
11/14	Eastham (F.E.)	200	B. Nikula	12/26	Barnstable (S.N.)	1	W. + A. Childs
11/14	Dennis	230	P. Flood	12/27	P.I.	1	CBC (T. Wetmore)
11/15	Rockport (A.P.)	104	R. Heil	<b>Common Murre</b>			
11/15	Pittsfield (Onota)	1	M. Iliff	11/15, 12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	4, 108	R. Heil
12/10	Lynn	320	P. Peterson	12/5	P'town	12	B. Nikula
12/24	Nantucket	600+	W. Hutcheson	12/29	Truro CBC	25	CBC
<b>Black-headed Gull</b>				12/31	Stellwagen CBC	22	CBC
11/7-8	Gloucester (E.P.)	1 ad	S. Hurley + v.o.	<b>Thick-billed Murre</b>			
11/8	Nantucket	1 ad	K. Blackshaw#	11/13, 12/5	P'town	2, 2	B. Nikula
11/19	P'town	1 1W	B. Nikula	11/14, 12/6	Eastham (F.E.)	1, 2	B. Nikula
11/28	Eastham (F.E.)	1 1W	B. Nikula	11/15, 12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	97, 22	R. Heil
11/29	Wellfleet H.	1 1W	B. Nikula	12/5	Sandwich	1 MAS (S. Wheelock)	
12/4	Scituate	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	12/31	P'town	3	B. Nikula
12/12	S. Truro	1 1W	J. Young#	<b>Razorbill</b>			
<b>Little Gull</b>				11/14	Eastham (F.E.)	35	B. Nikula
11/1, 11/18	P'town	2 1W, 1 ad	B. Nikula	11/14	P'town	165	B. Nikula
12/24	Nantucket	1	W. Hutcheson	11/14	Dennis	69	P. Flood
<b>Laughing Gull</b>				11/15, 12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	302, 746	R. Heil
11/1	Acoaxet	19	M. Lynch#	11/23	Nantucket	950	W. Hutcheson
11/1, 8	P'town	75, 1	B. Nikula	11/29	Wellfleet	480	M. Faherty
11/15	Rockport (A.P.)	3 ad	R. Heil	12/5, 28	P'town	726, 800	B. Nikula
11/29	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw#	12/31	P.I.	95	T. Wetmore
<b>Mew Gull</b> (no details) *				12/31	N. Truro	300	B. Nikula
11/26-12/7	Gloucester H.	1 ad ph	R. Heil + v.o.	<b>Black Guillemot</b>			
<b>Mew Gull</b> (details submitted) *				11/15, 12/9	Rockport (A.P.)	14, 11	R. Heil
12/8	Swampscott	1 ph	T. Factor#	11/21	Marshfield	4	R. Bowes

Black Guillemot (continued)				11/27	Eastham (F.E.)	2	B. Nikula
12/12	Gloucester	7	P. + F. Vale	12/29	Truro CBC	2	CBC
12/28	P'town	1	B. Nikula	Large alcid species			
<b>Atlantic Puffin</b>				12/5, 28	P'town 1345, 10,700		B. Nikula
11/14	P'town	1	B. Nikula				

## DOVES THROUGH FINCHES

A **White-winged Dove** was found on the CBC in Old Sturbridge Village, where it was seen for several days before it moved to the Bird Store and More of Sturbridge, where it remained beyond the last day of 2009. Another **White-winged Dove** was found and photographed in Plymouth on December 20 but was not found on the Plymouth CBC two days later. A pair of **Monk Parakeets** was seen in various places around East Boston, but two seen at the Boston Public Garden during this time were probably a different pair. There have been few recent reports of this species, the latest being from Millennium Park in West Roxbury on April 30, 2006; most reports have been from Bristol County, although not since 2005. A very late Yellow-billed Cuckoo was photographed at Nahant on November 21, which tied the record for the latest report, which occurred on Martha's Vineyard in 1954.

Because Snowy Owl reports from western Massachusetts are unusual, a report in Montague was noteworthy. Three Long-eared Owls found in the Connecticut River Valley raised hopes for a good year for this species, but only two additional birds were discovered during this period. The number of Northern Saw-whet Owls banded in eastern Massachusetts was encouraging; a total of 42 were banded at Lookout Rock in Northbridge in November. The total for the season was 86, including four foreign recaptures, though still a far cry from 2007, when 259 were banded.

The **Allen's Hummingbird** first found on October 23 in Scituate was last seen on December 29, when it presumably died after the temperature plummeted to single digits, and there was a strong northwest wind. It did, however, make it for the Marshfield CBC on December 27, a first State CBC record. The Scituate bird was actually the third State record for this species; the first was a bird caught in a mist net on Nantucket on August 26, 1988. On October 1, 2009, a juvenile male Allen's showed up at a feeder in Harwichport, though it was not positively identified until January 1, 2010, when it was caught and banded. The homeowners circled the feeder with Christmas tree lights in an effort to keep the sugar water from freezing; it was recorded on the Cape Cod CBC on December 30 for the second State CBC record!

The Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest continued to be a hot spot for woodpeckers, after the initial discovery of an adult Red-headed there on October 10. Birders have now confirmed the presence of two adults and two immatures, an indication that these birds had probably been in the area for some time. All the common woodpeckers were also seen in this forest.

The mild temperatures during most of November and early December made birding comfortable, and birders made the most of it by documenting many late record dates for birds as well as a few very nice vagrants. Among the flycatchers, an Eastern Wood-Pewee was photographed on Plum Island, only the third November record. An *Empidonax* in Melrose was thought to be a Least Flycatcher, but it eluded positive identification. Four Western Kingbirds were reported. A Warbling Vireo found in Turners Falls on November 16 eclipsed the previous late date of a bird banded at Manomet on November 11, 1982. A Swainson's Thrush was carefully identified and photographed in the Florence area of Northampton on December 14, and another was banded at Manomet on November 4. December warbler reports included a Northern Parula on the very late date of December 29, a Yellow Warbler from Falmouth, a Black-throated Blue from Malden, and a Blackpoll in Rockport. The Boston Fenway Victory

Gardens were alive with warblers almost right up to the Greater Boston CBC. The highlight, of course, was a **MacGillivray's Warbler** discovered on November 17 and present until at least December 16. Ironically another MacGillivray's was seen in virtually the same area in November–December 1999. Also found in the frost-free gardens were as many as four Orange-crowned, a Yellow, a Nashville, a Black-throated Blue, a Black-and-white, and a Yellow-breasted Chat, as well as a Yellow-rumped, a Palm, and a Common Yellowthroat! A second **MacGillivray's Warbler** was discovered at Wright's Pond in Medford on November 21 and was present up until at least December 14. Imagine *two* MacGillivray's Warblers on a New England CBC, but unfortunately a nor'easter arrived a day before the Greater Boston CBC, forcing a postponement to the following weekend, by which time neither bird was being seen. A **Townsend's Warbler** managed to find the only banding station on Cape Cod (in Brewster), and it remained in the area for three days. A **Henslow's Sparrow**, discovered and photographed in South Dartmouth, was only the seventh record in the last sixteen years. A **Western Tanager**, probably a first for Suffolk County, was found and photographed in the Boston Public Garden on November 13.

Cumberland Farms was the other hot spot during this period, as it had been through the fall migration (see Jim Sweeney: "Birding the Cumberland Farm Fields" *Bird Observer*, Vol. 36, No. 5, 2008). Throughout the period large flocks of Horned Larks and American Pipits as well as all the regularly occurring sparrow species were found in these extensive fields. The **LeConte's Sparrow**, first found on October 20, was last documented on November 9. This usually secretive sparrow took up residence in a small isolated patch of phragmites and delighted scores of birders who had no problem tramping through the muddy fields to get wonderful views. The LeConte's was joined by another rare visitor, a **Lark Bunting**, on November 4. The bunting was much more of a skulker, spending much of the time deep in the grass. Rounding out the more unusual "Cumbie's" visitors were a Clay-colored Sparrow, a Vesper Sparrow, and a late **Blue Grosbeak**.

As is often the case during the start of the bird-feeding season, some surprises turn up. In one small section of East Orleans *two* **Painted Buntings** and a bright **Summer Tanager** arrived for extended stays. An extraordinary find was a **Common Chaffinch**, which showed up at the Waltham feeder of Jason Forbes, an experienced birder (what are the chances!). Because the location allowed only three or four people to view it at the same time, it was not possible to make it public, but Jason scheduled small parties to visit, and by the end of December about one hundred people had seen the chaffinch. There are only two previous records of this species in the state, the first on April 1, 1961, in Chatham, and the second April 3–5, 1997, in Scituate.

*R. Stymeist*

<b>White-winged Dove</b> (details submitted)*		12/23	Woburn (HP)	2	M. Rines	
12/14-31 Sturbridge	1 ph	I. Lynch + v.o.	12/25	Concord	2	C. Anderson
12/20 Plymouth	1 ph	C. Goldthwaite	12/30	Lincoln	2	G. Loud
<b>Monk Parakeet</b>			Snowy Owl			
11/20-12/4 E. Boston	2 ph	M. Anderson	12/thr	PI.	1-2	v.o.
11/22 Boston (PB)	2	J. Trimble	12/26	Gr. Boston CBC	3	CBC
Yellow-billed Cuckoo			12/27-28	Montague	1	T. Ricardi
11/3 DWWS	1	C. Nims	Barred Owl			
11/5 Eastham (F.H.)	1	M. Faherty	11/2	Medford	1	R. LaFontaine
11/21 Nahant	1 ph	MAS (D. Larson)	11/7	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#
Black-billed Cuckoo			11/12-12/2	Boston	1-2	v.o.
11/16 Duxbury	1	R. Bowes	12/2	Westwood	1	B. Cassie
Eastern Screech-Owl			12/2	Belmont	1	J. Sharp#
11/6 Cumb. Farms	2	J. Trimble#	12/8	Quabbin (G5)	1	C. Ellison
11/29 Boston (A.A.)	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)	12/15-18	Wompatuck SP	1	J. Galluzzo
12/26 Gr. Boston CBC	29	CBC	12/18	New Braintree	1	C. Ellison
Great Horned Owl			Long-eared Owl			
11/1 Randolph	2	P. Peterson	12/17	Northampton	1	T. Mailler + v.o.
11/21 Belmont	2	R. Stymeist#	12/20	Hadley	2	CBC (Higgins)
11/22 Chatham (MI)	2	Hawkcount (DM)	12/25	E. Boston	1	P. Peterson

Long-eared Owl (continued)				11/7	DWWS	1 imm	R. Bowes
12/27	Newbypt. CBC	1	CBC	11/8	Windsor	1	T. Gagnon
Short-eared Owl				11/8	Tyringham	1	M. Lynch#
11/5-26	Cumb. Farms	1-2	v.o.	11/9	Richmond	1	J. Morris-Siegel
Northern Saw-whet Owl				12/13	Wayland	1 imm	B. Harris
11/1-21	Northbridge	42 b	B. Milke#	12/27	Southwick	1	CBC (R. Buhner)
11/7	Ware R. IBA	4	M. Lynch#	12/27	Gill	1	CBC
11/18	E. Bridgewater	1	J. Sweeney	12/30	Sheffield	1	J. Drucker
12/2	Westwood	1	B. Cassie	White-eyed Vireo			
12/15-31	Burlington	1	M. Rines	11/30	Rockport (H.P.)	1	B. Dwyer
12/19	Holyoke	1	CBC (D. McLain)	12/13	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	E. Nielsen
12/24	Newbypt	1	T. Wetmore	Blue-headed Vireo			
12/27	Westminster	1	T. Pirro	12/13	Cambr. (F.P.)	1	N. Yusoff
<b>Allen's Hummingbird</b> (detatils submitted) *				Warbling Vireo			
thr	Harwichport 1 ad f b ph		C. Omar	11/16	Turners Falls	1	M. Iliff
11/1-12/29	Scituate 1 ad f b ph		T. + A. Jones	Fish Crow			
Belted Kingfisher				11/7	Bourne	17	BBC (R. Stymeist)
thr	Reports of indiv. from 25 locations			11/8	Cambr. (F.P)	50	J. Forbes
12/14	Sturbridge CBC	19	CBC	11/20	Mattapan	50	M. Trimitsis
Red-headed Woodpecker				11/29	Boston	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)
thr	Dracut	2 ad, 2 imm	A. Gaudet	12/2	Braintree	2	P. Peterson
Red-bellied Woodpecker				12/14	Mashpee	100	M. Keleher
11/8	New Marlboro	4	M. Lynch#	Common Raven			
11/22	Waltham	3	J. Forbes	11/5	Concord	2	S. Perkins#
11/22	Fairhaven	4	G. d'Entremont	11/7	Barre Falls	12	B. Kamp#
12/14	Sturbridge CBC	70	CBC	11/16	Melrose	2	D. + I. Jewell
12/14	Taunton	4	J. Sweeney	12/8	Quabbin (G5)	2	C. Ellison
12/19	Falmouth	9	M. Keleher	12/25	Lincoln	2	D. Lange
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				Horned Lark			
thr	Reports of indiv. from 17 locations			thr	Cumb. Farms	175 max	v.o.
11/7	N. Falmouth	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)	thr	P.I.	26 max	v.o.
11/10	DFWS	2	P. Sowizral	11/3	Ipswich	50+	J. Berry
Hairy Woodpecker				11/22	Saugus (Rumney)	45	S. Zende#
11/15	Lakeville	4	SSBC (J. Sweeney)	11/22	Sharon	90	SSBC (V. Zollo)
11/22	Saugus	3	D. + I. Jewell	12/6	Northampton	325	S. Surner
12/4	Wayland	3	G. Long	12/14	E. Bridgewater	35	J. Sweeney
12/14	Sturbridge CBC	42	CBC	12/24	Nantucket	26	W. Hutcheson
12/24	Brewster	2	P. Trull	12/30	Salisbury	25	MAS (B. Gette)
12/24	Littleton	2	K. Cole	12/31	Hadley	200	H. Allen
12/25	Waltham	2	J. Forbes	Red-breasted Nuthatch			
Northern Flicker				11/8	Nantucket	8	K. Blackshaw#
11/8	Harwichport	12	A. Curtis	11/15	Lakeville	4	SSBC (J. Sweeney)
12/13	Nantucket	8	K. Blackshaw#	11/16	E. Quabbin	21	L. Therrien
12/13	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	5	E. Nielsen	11/22	New Salem	4	B. Zajda
12/15	WBWS	6	M. Faherty	12/24	Boston (A.A.)	3	P. Peterson
12/19	Falmouth	10	M. Keleher	Brown Creeper			
12/25	Wayland	2	B. Harris	11/1	Medford	2	P. Devaney
Pileated Woodpecker				11/8	Winchester	3	R. LaFontaine
11/3	Dracut	2	A. Gaudet	11/12	Quabbin	4	C. Ellison
11/8	New Marlboro	3	M. Lynch#	11/19	Melrose	3	P. + F. Vale
11/12	Quabbin	2	C. Ellison	11/22	New Salem	2	B. Zajda
11/15	Southboro	1	M. Lynch#	12/4	Wayland	4	G. Long
12/24	Littleton	3	K. Cole	12/31	Concord	2	D. Swain
12/31	Concord	2	D. Swain	Carolina Wren			
Eastern Wood-Pewee				11/1	Milton (BH)	4	SSBC (V. Zollo)
11/1	P.I.	1 ph	S. Sullivan	11/7	Bourne	15	BBC (R. Stymeist)
Empidonax species				11/8	Fairhaven	39	BBC (R. Stymeist)
11/6	Melrose	1	D. + I. Jewell	11/15	Lakeville	7	SSBC (J. Sweeney)
Eastern Phoebe				11/16	Lincoln	8	M. Rines
11/1	S. Quabbin	1	S. Surner	11/22	Fairhaven	15	G. d'Entremont
11/2	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore	12/13	Orleans	14	G. d'Entremont
11/4	S. Carver	1	B. Conway	12/19	Falmouth	20	M. Keleher
11/8	Winchester	1	R. LaFontaine	House Wren			
12/13	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	11/8	Fairhaven	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)
Western Kingbird				11/9	Randolph	1	P. Peterson
11/3-8	Eastham (F.H.)	1 ph	P. Trull + v.o.	11/thr	Boston	1	R. Stymeist + v.o.
11/7	Orleans	1 ph	L. Ferraresso#	12/4	Hadley	1	H. Allen
11/7-17	Gloucester	1 ph	S. Hedman + v.o.	Winter Wren			
11/7-13	DWWS	1	R. Bowes + v.o.	thr	Reports of indiv. from 20 locations		
Northern Shrike				11/7	Bourne	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)
thr	P.I.	1-2	v.o.	11/8	Fairhaven	7	BBC (R. Stymeist)
thr	Cumb. Farms	1 ad	v.o.	12/14	Sturbridge CBC	6	CBC
11/4	S. Carver	1	B. Conway	12/19	Falmouth	2	M. Keleher

<b>Marsh Wren</b>				<b>American Pipit</b>			
thr	GMNWR	3 max	v.o.	11/1	Sharon	25	J. Baur
11/thr	P.I.	1-2	v.o.	11/1-12/12	Cumb. Farms	245 max	v.o.
11/10	DWWS	1	J. Sweeney	11/7	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	25	P. Champlin
11/15	Lakeville	1	SSBC (J. Sweeney)	11/26	Hadley	63	S. Surner
11/29	Wayland	9	B. Harris	11/26	Sheffield	100	J. Drucker
12/4	Falmouth	1	M. Keleher	12/14	E. Bridgewater	15	J. Sweeney
12/5	Wayland	4	B. Harris	12/18	New Braintree	6	C. Ellison
12/8	Harwich	1	B. Nikula	12/19	Cumb. Farms	4	D. Bates#
12/30	E. Orleans	1	CBC (R. Heil)	12/29	Wrentham	6	E. LoPresti
<b>Golden-crowned Kinglet</b>				<b>Cedar Waxwing</b>			
11/1	Milton (BH)	9	SSBC (V. Zollo)	11/6	Boston (A.A.)	128	M. Garvey
11/7	Quabbin Pk	12	M. Lynch#	11/28	Wakefield	135+	P. + F. Vale
11/15	Lakeville	21	SSBC (J. Sweeney)	12/5	Rockport (H.P.)	60	J. Hoye#
11/21	Quabbin	25	L. Therrien	12/18	Scituate	60+ MAS	(J. Galluzzo)
11/22	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	10	E. Nielsen	12/19	Athol CBC	800	CBC
12/1	Mashpee	13	M. Keleher	12/22	Middleboro	100	H. Levesque
12/14	Taunton	10	J. Sweeney	12/22	Sturbridge	50	R. Heil
<b>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</b>				<b>Orange-crowned Warbler</b>			
11/8	Fairhaven	5	BBC (R. Stymeist)	11/1-12/16	Boston (Fens)	4 max	v.o.
11/11	Dracut	3	P. Peterson	11/1-12/17	Reports of indiv. from 15 locations		
11/12	Quabbin	3	C. Ellison	11/26	Chelsea	2	R. Stymeist
11/22	Rockport	3	B. Harris#	<b>Nashville Warbler</b>			
11/30	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	3	P. Champlin	11/6	Boston (A.A.)	1	M. Garvey
12/18	New Braintree	2	C. Ellison	11/7	Plymouth	1	I. Davies#
12/20	Northampton	3	CBC	11/17	DWWS	1	E. Dalton
<b>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher</b>				11/19	Boston (Fens)	1	P. Gilmore
12/20	Westport	1	B. Cassie	<b>Northern Parula</b>			
<b>Eastern Bluebird</b>				12/29	E. Bridgewater	1 f	E. Giles
11/1	Concord	23	W. Hutcheson	<b>Yellow Warbler</b>			
11/2	Lincoln	12	M. Rines	11/29-12/1	Boston	1	R. Stymeist# + v.o.
11/4	DFWS	19	P. Sowizral	12/5	Falmouth	1	SSBC (J. Kenneally)
11/8	Shutesbury	12	K. Weir	<b>Black-throated Blue Warbler</b>			
11/8	Harwichport	34	A. Curtis	11/2	Boston (Fens)	1 m	R. Schain
11/22	Southwick	12	S. Kellogg	11/3	Manomet	1 b	I. Davies#
12/19	Eastham	12	D. Bates#	12/13-16	Malden	1 m	K. Marshall
12/20	Amherst	16	H. Allen	<b>Yellow-rumped Warbler</b>			
12/27	Groton Oxbow	99	CBC	11/7	Bourne	18	BBC (R. Stymeist)
<b>Swainson's Thrush</b>				11/8	Harwichport	32	A. Curtis
11/4	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#	11/8	Fairhaven	32	BBC (R. Stymeist)
12/14	Florence	1 ph	B. Higgins	11/15	Nantucket	55	K. Blackshaw#
<b>Hermit Thrush</b>				11/21	Westport	27	J. Offermann
11/1	Milton (BH)	4	SSBC (V. Zollo)	11/22	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	32	E. Nielsen
11/7	Bourne	4	BBC (R. Stymeist)	12/13	Orleans	18	G. d'Entremont
11/8	Fairhaven	5	BBC (R. Stymeist)	12/15	WBWS	5	M. Faherty
11/15	Lakeville	5	SSBC (J. Sweeney)	12/30	Rockport (H.P.)	2	P. Peterson
11/30	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	4	P. Champlin	<b>Black-throated Green Warbler</b>			
12/4-5	Rockport (H.P.)	2	P. Peterson + v.o.	11/12	Boston (PG)	1	P. Peterson
12/19	Falmouth	4	M. Keleher	<b>Townsend's Warbler</b> (details submitted) *			
12/24	Boston (A.A.)	3	P. Peterson	11/7-9	Brewster	1 b ph	S. Finnegan#
12/26	Quabbin CBC	2	CBC	<b>Pine Warbler</b>			
<b>American Robin</b>				11/9	P'town (R.P.)	1	P. Champlin
11/1	Concord	500	W. Hutcheson	11/15	DWWS	1	G. d'Entremont
11/6	Cumb. Farms	2500	J. Trimble#	12/25	Rehoboth	1	K. Bartels
11/24	Boston (Fens)	450	R. Stymeist#	<b>Palm Warbler</b>			
11/26	Sheffield	1000	J. Drucker	11/1	Randolph	2	P. Peterson
12/12	Cambridge	400	J. Sharp#	11/5	Cumb. Farms	1	M. Iliff
12/13	Brookfield	500	M. Lynch#	11/6	Boston (F.Pk)	1	M. Kaufman
<b>Gray Catbird</b>				12/13	Wellfleet	1	J. Young#
11/7	Bourne	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)	<b>Blackpoll Warbler</b>			
11/8	Fairhaven	9	BBC (R. Stymeist)	11/1	Cumb. Farms	2	G. d'Entremont#
11/18	Burlington	2	M. Rines	11/1	Randolph	1	P. Peterson
12/5	Falmouth	2	SSBC (J. Kenneally)	12/3	Rockport (H.P.)	1 f imm	J. Offermann
12/13	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	9	E. Nielsen	<b>Black-and-white Warbler</b>			
12/14	E. Bridgewater	3	J. Sweeney	11/26-30	Boston (Fens)	1	A. Gurka#+v.o.
12/23	Lexington	2	M. Rines	<b>Prothonotary Warbler</b>			
<b>Brown Thrasher</b>				11/7	Bourne	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)
thr	P.I.	1	v.o.	<b>MacGillivray's Warbler</b> (details submitted) *			
11/10	DWWS	1	J. Sweeney	11/17-12/16	Boston (Fens)	1 ph	P. Peterson + v.o.
11/21	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	2	J. Offermann	11/21-12/14	Medford	1 ph	A. Piccolo + v.o.
12/7	Easthampton	1	D. McLain	<b>Common Yellowthroat</b>			
12/24	Brewster	1	P. Trull	11/1	Westport	2	M. Lynch#
				11/21	Winthrop	1	MAS (D. Larson)

Common Yellowthroat (continued)				Nelson's Sparrow			
11/22	Boston	2	R. Stymeist	11/1	E. Boston (B.I.)	1	T. Factor
12/19	N. Berkshire CBC	1	CBC	11/7	Eastham	3	M. Faherty
Wilson's Warbler				12/2	Fairhaven	3	C. Longworth
11/5	Eastham	1	C. Nims	Saltmarsh Sparrow			
12/6	Cambr. (Alewife)	1	F. Bouchard	11/1	E. Boston (B.I.)	5	T. Factor
Yellow-breasted Chat				12/2	Fairhaven	1	C. Longworth
11/8	Harwichport	1	A. Curtis	Seaside Sparrow			
11/10	Manomet	1 b	Lloyd-Evans#	11/4	Eastham (F.H.)	1	M. Faherty
11/15-26	Boston (Fens)	1	O. Spalding#	Fox Sparrow			
11/21	Rockport (A.P.)	1	M. Lynch#	11/8	Lexington	7	M. Rines#
11/23-12/1	Boston (PO Sq.)	1	M. Garvey#	11/16	Lincoln	4	M. Rines
12/5	Wayland	1	B. Harris	12/8	Quabbin (G5)	4	C. Ellison
12/13	Orleans	1	G. d'Entremont	12/10	Stoneham	2	D. + I. Jewell
12/26	Wakefield	1	CBC (P. + F. Vale)	12/14	Sturbridge CBC	7	CBC
Eastern Towhee				12/16	Boxboro	2	R. Grossman
11/8	Fairhaven	4	BBC (R. Stymeist)	12/20	Amherst	2	CBC (H. Allen)
11/16	Lincoln	5	M. Rines	Lincoln's Sparrow			
11/19	E. Bridgewater	2	J. Sweeney	11/1	Ipswich	1	J. Berry
11/21	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	7	J. Offermann	12/13	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	E. Nielsen
12/14	Taunton	3	J. Sweeney	12/18	New Braintree	1	C. Ellison
12/25	Lakeville	2	M. Baird	12/19	Cumb. Farms	1	D. Bates#
American Tree Sparrow				12/20	S. Hadley	1	CBC (N. Baker)
thr	Cumb. Farms	65 max	v.o.	Swamp Sparrow			
thr	P.I.	61 max	v.o.	thr	Cumb. Farms	25 max	v.o.
11/2	GMNWR	3	A. Bragg#	11/1	Concord	22	W. Hutcheson
11/12	Quabbin	14	C. Ellison	11/8	Harwichport	6	A. Curtis
12/13	Cambr. (F.P.)	18	N. Yusoff	11/22	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	4	E. Nielsen
12/18	Waltham	15	J. Forbes	12/1	Mashpee	7	M. Keleher
12/19	Wakefield	45	P. + F. Vale	12/13	Boston (RKG)	4	R. Stymeist
Chipping Sparrow				12/13	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	5	E. Nielsen
11/1	Concord	3	W. Hutcheson	White-throated Sparrow			
11/4	E. Middleboro	2	K. Anderson	11/1	Concord	49	W. Hutcheson
12/13	Melrose	2	D. + I. Jewell	11/1	Ipswich	47	J. Berry
Clay-colored Sparrow				11/1	Boston	83	R. Stymeist
11/5	Eastham	1	C. Nims	12/13	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	45	E. Nielsen
11/6	Cumb. Farms	1	J. Trimble	12/14	Sturbridge CBC	606	CBC
12/2	Boston (Fens)	1 ph	A. Strauss	12/19	Wakefield	45	P. + F. Vale
12/3	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	P. Peterson	White-crowned Sparrow			
12/20	Hadley	1	CBC (J. P. Smith)	thr	Cumb. Farms	14 max	v.o.
Field Sparrow				11/1	Lexington	2	J. Forbes
11/1	Acoaxet	4	M. Lynch#	11/29	Weymouth	1	E. LeBlanc#
11/7	Bourne	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)	12/8	Quabbin (G5)	1	C. Ellison
11/8	Orleans	2	L. Ferraresso#	12/12	Deerfield	1	S. Sumner
11/19	Cumb. Farms	8	J. Sweeney	12/14	E. Bridgewater	2	J. Sweeney
11/22	Fairhaven	3	G. d'Entremont	12/25	Northampton	1	F. Bowrys
12/6-26	Plymouth	12	K. Doyon	Dark-eyed Junco			
12/13	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	9	E. Nielsen	11/7	Quabbin Pk	159	M. Lynch#
Vesper Sparrow				11/10	DFWS	50	P. Sowizral
11/9-30	Cumb. Farms	1	Barber, Sweeney	11/15	Southboro	232	M. Lynch#
Lark Sparrow				12/14	Sturbr. CBC	2345	CBC
11/12-18	P.I.	1 ph	S. Haydock+v.o.	12/14	Taunton	55	J. Sweeney
<b>Lark Bunting</b>				12/19	Athol CBC	3096	CBC
11/4-12/12	Cumb. Farms 1 imm ph		J. Sweeney+v.o.	12/20	Northam. CBC	3195	CBC
Savannah Sparrow				12/26	Boston CBC	1683	CBC
thr	Cumb. Farms	65 max	v.o.	12/27	Groton Oxbow	1265	CBC
11/1	Concord	37	W. Hutcheson	Lapland Longspur			
11/1	Ipswich	10	J. Berry	11/1	Hadley	2	S. Sumner
11/16	Lincoln	4	M. Rines	11/3	Ipswich	1	P. Peterson
12/15	WBWS	6	M. Faherty	11/4	Manomet	1	I. Davies#
12/24	Nantucket	2	W. Hutcheson	11/23	P.I.	5	T. Wetmore
Ipswich Sparrow				12/11	Northampton	2	H. Allen
thr	P.I.	1-2	v.o.	12/23	Salisbury	2	MAS (B. Gette)
11/7	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	P. Champlin	12/31	Hyannis	1	G. d'Entremont#
11/19	Duxbury B.	6 ph	R. Bowes	Snow Bunting			
12/4	Scituate	2	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	thr	P.I.	90 max	v.o.
12/21	Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney	11/7	Cumb. Farms	248	N. Paulson
12/24	Nantucket	3	W. Hutcheson	11/8	Saugus	150	S. Zende#
<b>Henslow's Sparrow</b> (details submitted) *				11/14	Bedford	82	M. Rines#
11/16	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1 ph	P. Champlin#	11/19	Duxbury B.	52	R. Bowes
<b>Le Conte's Sparrow</b> (details submitted) *				11/30	Wellfleet	48	M. Faherty
11/1-9	Cumb. Farms	1 ph	M. Iliff + v.o.	12/11	Northampton	40	H. Allen
				12/24	Nantucket	46	W. Hutcheson

Snow Bunting (continued)				12/23	Weston	100	E. Petcavage
12/31 Hyannis	75	G. d'Entremont#			Brown-headed Cowbird		
<b>Summer Tanager</b>				11/1	Marshfield	64	I. Davies#
11/25-12/31 E. Orleans	1 m	A. + E. Hultin		11/5-6	Concord (NAC)	325	S. Perkins#
<b>Western Tanager</b>				11/19	E. Bridgewater	40	J. Sweeney
11/13-15 Boston (PG)	1 f imm ph	T. Factor#		11/22	Sharon	300	SSBC (V. Zollo)
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				12/5	Wayland	30	B. Harris
11/15 Brewster	1 m imm ph	P. Trull		12/10	Duxbury B.	65	R. Bowes
Blue Grosbeak				12/17	Northboro	100	B. Volkle
11/5-7 Cumb. Farms	1 ph	M. Iliff			Baltimore Oriole		
<b>Painted Bunting</b>				11/3	Lincoln	2	M. Durand
12/7-30 E. Orleans	1 f ph	Nancy Burkert		11/8	Orleans	2	C. Nims
12/13 Orleans	2	G. d'Entremont		11/12	Boston (Fens)	2 f	R. Schain
<b>Dickcissel</b>				11/15	Billerica	1	P. Guidetti
12/12 Essex	1 imm	P. Brown		11/20	Lexington	2	M. Rines
12/22 Plymouth CBC	1	CBC		12/10	DFWS	1 imm	P. Sowizral
12/24 Acton	1 m	D. Southall		12/14	Amherst	1	H. Allen
Red-winged Blackbird				12/15	WBWS	2	M. Faherty
11/5 Cumb. Farms	600	M. Iliff			<b>Common Chaffinch</b>		
11/8 Sheffield	1300	M. Lynch#		12/thr	Waltham	1 m	J. Forbes + v.o.
11/21 Lincoln	400	M. Rines			<b>Purple Finch</b>		
11/26 Petersham	505	M. Lynch#		11/1	Concord	6	W. Hutcheson
12/thr Wayland	200 max	B. Harris		11/2	Newton	2	P. Gilmore
12/24 Medford	300	P. Devaney		11/5	Cumb. Farms	2	M. Iliff
12/26 Brookline	195	R. Martel#		11/8	Boston (F. Pk.)	2	P. Peterson
12/28 Milton	450	R. Mussey		11/18	Rockport (H.P.)	4	P. Peterson
Eastern Meadowlark				12/14	Taunton	2	J. Sweeney
11/2 Barre Falls	1	B. Kamp			<b>Red Crossbill</b>		
11/4 Eastham (F.H.)	8	M. Faherty		12/26	C. Quabbin	14	CBC (T. Gagnon)
11/4 Chatham (MI)	2	Hawkcount (DM)		12/27	Granville	1	CBC (J. Weeks)
11/7 DWWS	4	R. Bowes			<b>White-winged Crossbill</b>		
11/22, 12/13 S. Dart. (A.Pd)	28, 5	E. Nielsen		11/3	Sheffield	13	S. Macdonald
12/21 Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney		12/6	Truro	3	G. Martin
Rusty Blackbird					<b>Common Redpoll</b>		
11/3 Belchertown	2	L. Therrien		12/25	Clarksburg	6	R. Therrien
11/7, 12/6 Wayland	31, 9	Long, Harris			<b>Pine Siskin</b>		
11/11 Lexington	1	M. Rines		thr	Reports of indiv. from 9 locations		
11/15 Westboro	3	M. Lynch#		11/22	New Salem	4	B. Zajda
11/26 Southwick	12	S. Kellogg		12/20	Northampton CBC	4	CBC
12/19 Athol CBC	2	CBC		12/24	Canton	2	M. Ross
12/26 Wrentham	8	E. LoPresti		12/25	Clarksburg	30	R. Therrien
Common Grackle					<b>Evening Grosbeak</b>		
11/1 Marshfield	1100	I. Davies#		11/8	Athol	pr	D. Small
11/10 GMNWR	7000	G. d'Entremont#		12/5	Adams	1	J. Jones
11/21 Lincoln	600	M. Rines		12/18	New Braintree	5	C. Ellison
11/26 N. Andover	400	B. Drummond#		12/20	Amherst	10	CBC (J. Marcum)
12/2 Roslindale	2500	M. Trimitis		12/20	Northamp. CBC	11	CBC



HARLEQUIN DUCK PAIR BY DAVID LARSON

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOU checklist, Seventh edition, 42nd through 50th Supplements , as published in *The Auk* 117: 847-58 (2000); 119:897-906 (2002); 120:923-32 (2003); 121:985-95 (2004); 122:1026-31 (2005); 123:926-36 (2006); 124(3):1109-15, 2007; 125(3):758-68, 2008; 126(3):705-14, 2009 (see <<http://www.aou.org/checklist/north/index.php>>).

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

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

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

Species on the Review List of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (indicated by an asterisk [\*] in the Bird Reports), as well as species unusual as to place, time, or known nesting status in Massachusetts, should be reported promptly to the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, c/o Matt Garvey, 137 Beaconsfield Rd. #5, Brookline, MA 02445, or by e-mail to <[mattgarvey@gmail.com](mailto:mattgarvey@gmail.com)>.

# ABOUT THE COVER

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## Barn Swallow

The Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is a truly amazing bird. Originally a cave-nesting species, it has shifted during the past several millennia to nesting almost exclusively on man-made structures. It is the world's most studied swallow, with major, largely European studies on such topics as the pluses and minuses of colonial breeding. Sexual selection studies indicate that tail length and associated characteristics are predictive of reproductive success, mate selection, and even resistance to parasites.

Barn Swallows are steely-blue above and buffy below in males or grayish in females. Both have chestnut throats and foreheads. They have long, deeply forked tails with white spots, which distinguish them from all other North American swallows. Juveniles are similar but have shorter forked tails, and the chestnut is less pronounced. Barn Swallows have an extensive breeding range, encompassing most of North America and Europe. They breed across Asia to Japan, in North Africa, and throughout the Middle East. The nominate race, *H. r. rustica*, is primarily European, and only one of the six subspecies, *H. r. erythrogaster*, breeds in North America. The Barn Swallow is closely related to six swallow species that are found from Africa to Australia, and the six are considered by some authorities to constitute a superspecies. In North America the breeding range of the Barn Swallow stretches from southern Alaska across Canada to Newfoundland and encompasses all of the territorial United States except peninsular Florida and parts of the southwest. Its range extends south into central Mexico.

Barn Swallows are long-distance migrants, wintering from central Mexico through Central America and in South America as far south as Chile and Argentina, where some breed during their winter stay. In Massachusetts they arrive from mid-April through May and are considered very common to abundant migrants, especially along the coast, and very common breeders throughout the state. They depart between August and early October. During migration, Barn Swallows roost in enormous flocks that disperse in the daytime to forage.

Barn Swallows are socially monogamous and occasionally polygamous, but males tend to wander, and one study found that nearly a quarter of the offspring had been sired by other than the resident male. A Barn Swallow pair may remain together for more than one year and often produces two broods. Occasional un-mated males will invade a territory, kill the chicks, break up the resident adult pair, and then pair-bond with the female. Barn Swallows are frequently cooperative breeders, with an extra adult contributing to nest building, incubation, brooding, mobbing predators, and, to a lesser degree, feeding the young. Barn Swallows are found in variety of habitats up to 9000 feet in elevation. They usually prefer open areas for foraging, access to mud for nest building, and human habitations or structures for nest sites.

They have a broad spectrum of vocalizations, including *cheep*, *cherp*, whistling calls, and song described as a twitter-warble, which consists of continuous warbling ending in a series of guttural sounds. Song is given by both sexes, either from perches or on the wing. The song functions as a mate attractant and is also used in male-male confrontations. Males defend the nest sites, chasing, pecking, or grappling with intruders.

Although Barn Swallows are colonial nesting birds, the costs of colonial nesting, including increased extra-pair copulations, increased ectoparasites, and increased predation, suggest that colonial living may have been forced on the species by a paucity of suitable nest sites. The cup-shaped nests are constructed of mud pellets on vertical walls, rafters, or beams with an overhang, or on protected horizontal surfaces. They may use wasp nests or other anchoring structures. They also use bridges and culverts and a wide range of other human-made structures. Both parents contribute to the nest building, but the female does the bulk of the work. They may re-use old nests with the addition of a new layer of mud. The mud is mixed with grass, and the nest is lined with fine vegetable material, horsehair, or feathers.

The clutch consists of four or five creamy-pink eggs spotted with dark colors. The female has a brood patch, which the male lacks, but the male does some of the incubation for the two weeks until hatching. The young are born with eyes closed and naked except for tufts of down. Both parents tend the young for the three weeks until fledging and may feed the young for another week. Full independence occurs within two weeks of fledging.

Barn Swallows forage on the wing, coursing or sweeping over fields or water, up to 30 feet above the surface. In flight they take flying insects. They prefer grassy areas such as pastures, often around domestic animals that draw and scare up insects. Barn Swallows sometimes snatch insects from plant or water surfaces. They are reported also to drink while flying over a water surface. Their diet is nearly 100% animal matter, including flies, bees, ants, dragonflies, butterflies—almost anything that flies. They tend to prefer a few large insects to many small ones.

Barn Swallows were hunted for the millinery trade in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Today they are plagued by mammalian and avian nest predators, snakes, and fire ants. Adults fall prey to hawks and owls and face competition for nest sites with Cliff Swallows and House Sparrows. Despite these problems, North American Barn Swallow populations have generally increased. Breeding Bird Census data suggest an increase in the United States but a decrease in Canada, where cold weather in spring may influence population numbers. Human activity has been enormously helpful to Barn Swallows. It has provided open agricultural lands and nest sites. For once, humans appear to be the good guys, and the future of this delightful species appears secure. 

*William E. Davis, Jr.*

## About the Cover Artist: Julie Zickefoose

Julie Zickefoose began as an illustrator of natural history subjects in 1976, when she was a college freshman. A six-year stint as a field biologist with The Nature Conservancy's Connecticut Chapter proved a strong motivator both to learn more about ecosystems and to go back to drawing as a career of sorts. (Drawing was easier, and the pay was better.) Along the way, Julie began to write essays about birds and animals, and writing slowly came to the forefront of her interests. Since 1986, *Bird Watcher's Digest* has been the major print venue for her writing as well as her illustrations, and her husband, Editor Bill Thompson III, maintains that it has nothing to do with favoritism. Julie has also contributed short commentaries, mostly critter stories, to National Public Radio's afternoon news program "All Things Considered."

Julie's first book of illustrated essays, *Letters from Eden*, was published in 2006. Her current book, a memoir about birds, is due out from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2010, but first she has to finish the paintings, so you never know.

Julie and her family live in Whipple, Ohio, in a ranch house topped by a forty-two-foot birdwatching tower (Bill's idea). 🦅



MERLIN BY DAVID LARSON

# AT A GLANCE

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February 2010



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

I love head-on views of birds. We seldom have a chance to obtain such looks through binoculars since the placement of most birds' eyes generally causes them to look at things side-on instead of straight ahead, unless of course the bird is something like an owl with frontally located eyes. A camera, however, is sometimes able to capture the unique and momentary, "Here's looking at you" perspective. The February "At a Glance" image offers just such a perspective.

Several features of the mystery bird are obvious. Most conspicuous are prominent light (white?) stripes over each eye, bold longitudinal streaks on the underparts, a uniformly-colored back, no apparent wing-bars, and long, thin, pale legs. The length and fineness of the bird's legs suggests that it is a wood-warbler, not a sparrow or finch, which have shorter, heavier legs more useful for scratching and hopping than walking. This identification is further confirmed by the bird's sharp, pointed bill, rather than the stout, conical bill typical of a seed-eating species. Although the plain-colored back of the mystery species and heavy marking on the underparts might at first suggest a thrush, none of the spot-breasted thrushes have prominent eye stripes like the pictured bird.

Given that the bird is a wood-warbler, the choices are quickly narrowed to those species without wing-bars but with streaking below and prominent eye stripes. These characteristics at once limit the choices to either Louisiana or Northern waterthrush, both of which spend a lot of time walking on the ground near water, and which are

quite similar in many respects. Distinguishing between these species in the field is often easiest by listening to their distinctive songs or by noting their preferred habitats — the sides of wooded upland streams for the Louisiana, and the edges of standing pools of water in densely vegetated swampy woods for the Northern. Since we cannot determine the habitat preference of the waterthrush in the picture (just as we often can't for waterthrushes observed during migration), other identification characters must be relied upon.

Three features are especially helpful in determining the identity of the mystery waterthrush. First, the eye stripes are broad and clearly extend around to the back of the head. Second, the throat appears clear and unmarked by streaks or spots. And, third, the ventral streaks appear wide and separated and do not coalesce into a dense necklace across the breast. This combination of features defines the Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*). The similar Northern Waterthrush has narrower and less extensive eye stripes, more densely spotted underparts, and a spotted throat that often produce a necklace effect across the upper breast.

Louisiana Waterthrushes are uncommon and local breeders on hillside streams in central and western Massachusetts and are generally rare and local as nesting birds in eastern parts of the state. Although rare as migrants, Louisiana Waterthrushes are among the first migrant wood-warblers to arrive in spring and the earliest to depart in summer; most leave for their winter quarters by the end of July. The author photographed the pictured Louisiana Waterthrush at Key West, Florida, in April 2009. 

*Wayne R. Petersen*

#### **NEW “STATE OF THE BIRDS”**

Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, announced the release of the “State of the Birds 2010” report at a press conference in Austin, Texas, on March 11. The publication follows a comprehensive report published a year ago indicating that nearly a third of the 800 bird species of the U.S. are endangered, threatened, or in significant decline. This latest report concludes that climate change further threatens to imperil hundreds of species of migratory birds already under stress from habitat loss, invasive species, and other environmental threats.

The publication is the product of a cooperative effort among federal and state wildlife agencies, scientific groups, and conservation organizations. You can download a copy here:

[www.stateofthebirds.org/pdf\\_files/State%20of%20the%20Birds\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.stateofthebirds.org/pdf_files/State%20of%20the%20Birds_FINAL.pdf).

This notice is from the BIRDING COMMUNITY E-BULLETIN. You can access past E-bulletins on the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) website: [www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html](http://www.refugenet.org/birding/birding5.html).

# AT A GLANCE

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SUSAN L. CARLSON

Can you identify the bird in this photograph?  
Identification will be discussed in next issue's AT A GLANCE.

## BIRDERS!

**Duck Stamps are not just for hunters.**

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BIRDING THE ARNOLD ARBORETUM	<i>Bob Mayer</i>	69
FEATHERS AND FLARES	<i>Joey Mason</i>	79
FOURTEENTH REPORT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE	<i>Marshall J. Iliff and Matthew P. Garvey</i>	82
ABOUT BOOKS D.I.Y.	<i>Mark Lynch</i>	102
BIRD SIGHTINGS November/December 2009		108
ABOUT THE COVER: Barn Swallow	<i>William E. Davis, Jr.</i>	122
ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST: Julie Zickefoose		124
AT A GLANCE	<i>Wayne R. Petersen</i>	125