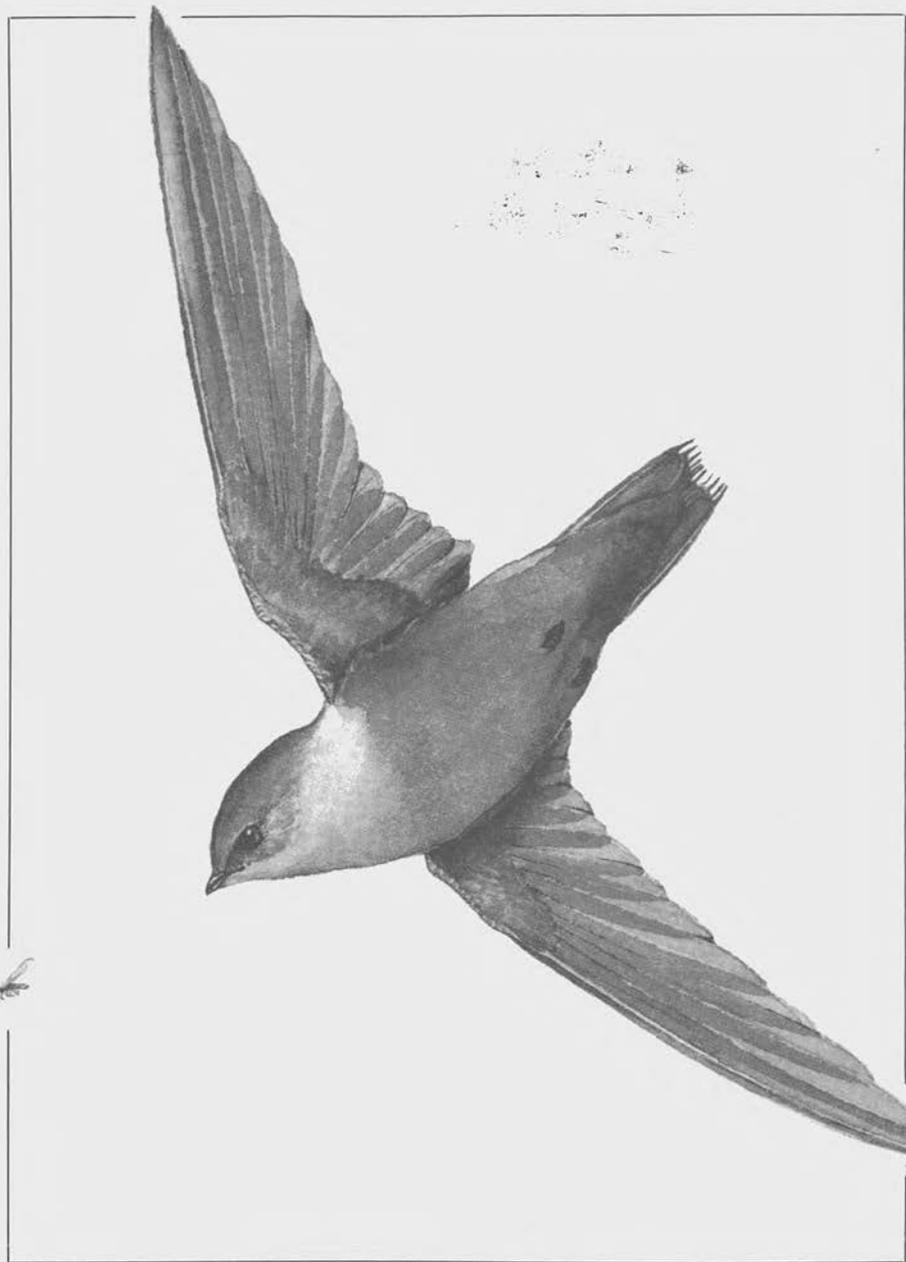


# BIRD OBSERVER



VOL. 15 NO. 4  
AUGUST 1987



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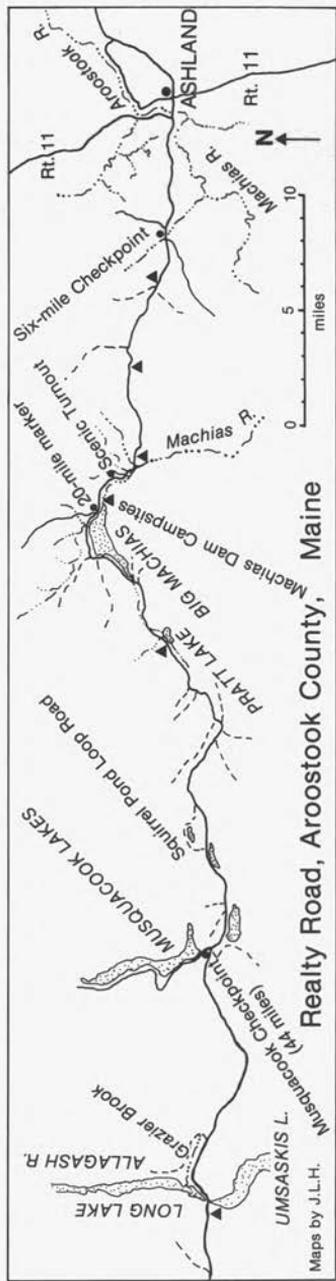
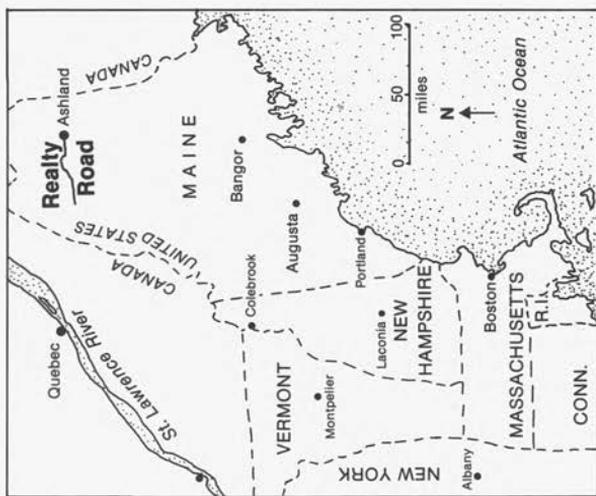
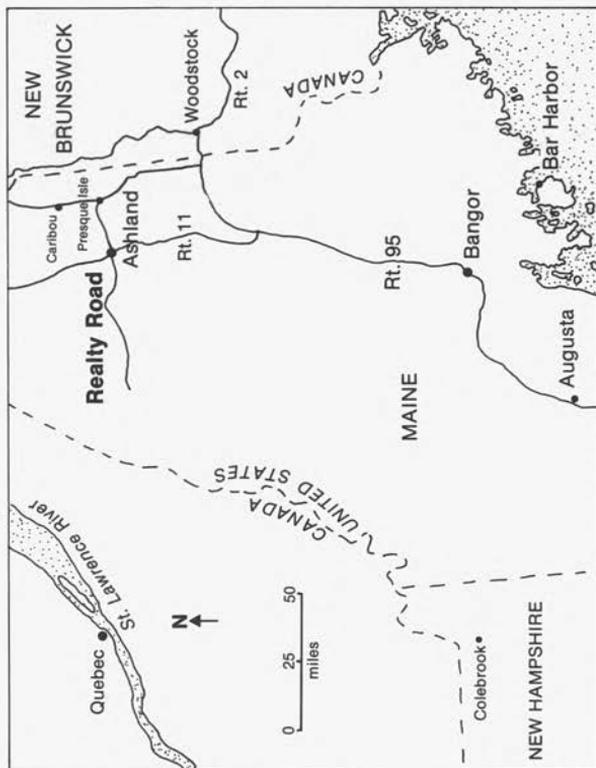
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For detailed maps of the Realty Road region, consult *The Maine Atlas* (Delorme Publishing Company), which is widely available in Maine.

## SUMMER BIRDING ALONG REALTY ROAD, AROOSTOOK COUNTY, MAINE

by Nicholas Komar

The American Realty Tote Road in Aroostook County, Maine, is a private logging road that provides an excellent opportunity to bird the vast wild lands of the North Maine Woods region. This region is rich in birdlife and other wildlife and offers the chance to see northern "specialty" birds such as Winter Wren, Gray Jay, Common Raven, Boreal Chickadee, Evening and Pine grosbeaks, crossbills, Three-toed and Black-backed woodpeckers, and others during the breeding season. Even Boreal Owl has been seen along this road. The relative abundance of Black-backed Woodpecker is especially welcomed by birders.

Realty Road, known locally as the "Reality Road," is open to the public for recreational purposes. A fee of \$2.00 per person is charged for the day or \$4.50 per person per day if you are camping at one of the many campsites along the road. The road is operated by the North Maine Woods Association, an organization of private (mostly paper companies) and public owners (the state of Maine) of the uninhabited spruce-fir forests of northern Maine.

To reach the road, from I-95 in East Millinocket, take Route 11 north to Ashland. Follow Route 11 through the town, and turn left just after you cross the Aroostook River. When the paved road bears left just past the Gateway Variety Store, go straight onto a dirt road. A sign there states that you are entering North Maine Woods and that *trucks have the right of way on this road. This caution must be taken very seriously.* This is Realty Road.

Realty Road will first take you through some potato fields. Check these fields for Upland Sandpiper, Horned Lark, Cliff Swallow, Bobolink, and Savannah Sparrow. After about six miles you will reach the Six-mile Checkpoint where you must stop, register, and pay applicable fees. As you continue west along the road, watch for Snowshoe Hare, Woodchuck, Red Fox, Coyote, White-tailed Deer, Moose, and Black Bear.

For three quarters of a mile beginning 1.2 miles beyond mile-marker 17 the spruce-fir forest has little underbrush and no major blowdowns and is relatively easy to walk through. This is probably the best place to enter the forest and the most likely area to find both Black-backed and Three-toed woodpeckers. In 1985, they both nested across the road from the scenic turnout at 18.6 miles. [Author's note: Miles given in the text such as "18.6 miles" refer to the total miles you have travelled since first entering Realty Road. Therefore, 18.6 miles is equivalent to 1.6 miles beyond mile marker 17.] Also be alert for Pileated Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, and Sharp-shinned and Broad-winged hawks.

SUMMER BIRD LIST FOR REALTY ROAD

A	Abundant	VU	Very Uncommon
VC	Very Common	R	Rare
C	Common	VR	Very Rare
U	Uncommon	O	Occasional

SPECIES	STATUS	SPECIES	STATUS
Common Loon	C	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	C
American Bittern	U	Veery	C
Great Blue Heron	U	Swainson's Thrush	C
Canada Goose	U	Hermit Thrush	C
American Black Duck	R	Wood Thrush	VR
Ring-necked Duck	R	American Robin	C
Greater Scaup	O	Gray Catbird	R
Common Goldeneye	C	Cedar Waxwing	U
Common Merganser	U	European Starling	R
Osprey	U	Solitary Vireo	U
Northern Harrier	VR	Warbling Vireo	VR
Sharp-shinned Hawk	U	Red-eyed Vireo	C
Broad-winged Hawk	C	Tennessee Warbler	C
Red-tailed Hawk	U	Nashville Warbler	VC
American Kestrel	R	Northern Parula	C
Ruffed Grouse	C	Yellow Warbler	U
Killdeer	U	Chestnut-sided Warbler	U
Spotted Sandpiper	C	Magnolia Warbler	VC
Common Snipe	C	Cape May Warbler	VC
American Woodcock	U	Black-throated Blue Warbler	U
Herring Gull	C	Yellow-rumped Warbler	VC
Barred Owl	C	Black-throated Green Warbler	U
Northern Saw-whet Owl	C	Blackburnian Warbler	A
Common Nighthawk	VC	Bay-breasted Warbler	C
Chimney Swift	U	Blackpoll Warbler	R
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	R	Black-and-white Warbler	R
Belted Kingfisher	VU	American Redstart	C
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	C	Ovenbird	U
Downy Woodpecker	VU	Northern Waterthrush	U
Hairy Woodpecker	VU	Mourning Warbler	U
Three-toed Woodpecker	VU	Common Yellowthroat	U
Black-backed Woodpecker	C	Wilson's Warbler	R
Northern Flicker	C	Canada Warbler	U
Pileated Woodpecker	U	Scarlet Tanager	U
Olive-sided Flycatcher	U	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	C
Eastern Wood-Pewee	R	Chipping Sparrow	C
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	VC	Savannah Sparrow	U
Alder Flycatcher	U	Fox Sparrow	O
Eastern Phoebe	VR	Song Sparrow	U
Great-crested Flycatcher	R	Lincoln's Sparrow	U
Eastern Kingbird	U	Swamp Sparrow	U
Horned Lark	VR	White-throated Sparrow	VC
Tree Swallow	C	Dark-eyed Junco	VC
Cliff Swallow	R	Bobolink	U
Barn Swallow	C	Red-winged Blackbird	C
Gray Jay	C	Common Grackle	C
Blue Jay	C	Brown-headed Cowbird	U
American Crow	C	Northern Oriole	VR
Common Raven	C	Pine Grosbeak	R
Black-capped Chickadee	U	Purple Finch	VC
Boreal Chickadee	C	Red Crossbill	VR
Red-breasted Nuthatch	C	White-winged Crossbill	VU
Brown Creeper	C	Pine Siskin	C
Winter Wren	C	American Goldfinch	U
Golden-crowned Kinglet	VC	Evening Grosbeak	A

This is not an inclusive list of all northern Maine woods species; it includes only those species that the author saw in the vicinity of Realty Road from May 25 to July 5, 1985.

The common breeding warblers in the forest are Tennessee, Nashville, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped, Cape May, Blackburnian, and Bay-breasted. Other birds commonly found throughout the spruce-fir forest anywhere along Realty Road are Ruffed Grouse, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Hairy Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Blue Jay, Gray Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Winter Wren, Hermit and Swainson's thrushes, Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned kinglets, Purple Finch, Evening Grosbeak, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, and White-throated Sparrow. Be alert at all times for Red and White-winged crossbills and Pine Grosbeaks to fly overhead.

From the scenic turnout, scan for Common Mergansers in the Machias River below, Olive-sided Flycatcher at the tops of the trees across the river, and Red-tailed Hawk soaring overhead. Also listen here for Northern Waterthrush and Canada Warbler, both commonly found near wet habitats along the road.

Continue west 1.3 miles from the scenic turnout to the Machias Dam Campsites. This is a fine spot to pitch a tent if you are camping. You must, however, reserve the site ahead of time. Information on how to reserve campsites can be found at the end of this article. Of the two campsites here, number 253 is farther from the road and prettier. Even if you are not camping, this is still a nice spot for birds. Listen for Olive-sided and Alder flycatchers singing from across the road. Walk along the path to the river, an excellent site for a swim if it is a hot day. Look for Common Merganser here, and scan the river's mouth (to the right) for Common Goldeneye, American Black Duck, and Ring-necked Duck. During the summer of 1985 I found a Greater Scaup at this spot, a highly unusual bird for Maine during the breeding season. This is also a good area for Moose. Listen here for Lincoln's Sparrow and for Swamp Sparrow, singing from the swampy edges of the estuary.

Continue west along Realty Road 0.4 mile. The second driveway on the left after the 20-mile marker is Machias Lake Camps, a sporting camp used for bear hunting in the fall. This is a convenient place to base yourself if you are staying for a few days. Cabins are spacious, comfortable, and well-equipped and cost \$12 per person per day. For information about staying here, contact Ivan and Peggy Porter, Ashland, ME 04732, telephone: 207-435-6977, well in advance of your trip. If you are not staying here, you should ask permission to bird on the lakeside property. Birds commonly found on and around this property are Common Loon, Great Blue Heron, American Bittern, Canada Goose, Ring-necked Duck, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Osprey, American Kestrel, Killdeer, Common Snipe, Spotted Sandpiper, Herring Gull, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Kingbird, Alder and Olive-sided flycatchers, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Chipping, Swamp, and Song sparrows.

At 1.4 miles farther west on Realty Road, there is a small but steep hill. The forest here, as in numerous places along the 20-mile stretch of road you have traveled, is deciduous. Listen here, or at any similar mixed-wood area, for Northern Flicker, Downy Woodpecker, American Robin, Wood Thrush, Veery, Red-eyed Vireo, Black-and-white Warbler, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green and Chestnut-sided warblers, Ovenbird, American Redstart, Scarlet Tanager, and Rose-Breasted Grosbeak.

Half a mile farther along on the left, you will see a large cleared area, overgrown with raspberries. If you stop here, remember to park well off the road, because heavy trucks have the right-of-way. It might be a good idea to park on the side road that you can see ahead of you. Like any clearing, this is a fine location for Mourning Warbler and Lincoln's Sparrow. The forest on the right is prime spruce-fir habitat and easy to walk through. Listen here for Solitary Vireo. I found a Northern Saw-whet Owl here as well.

Continue west on Realty Road, following the signs for McNally's to avoid taking any wrong forks. At approximately 27.7 miles, a small clearing on the right marks the entrance to an old overgrown logging road. Owling here yielded Northern Saw-whet and Barred owls. About a half-mile along the overgrown path, I saw and heard a Fox Sparrow singing in late May and early June of 1985. Fox Sparrows have not been thought to breed in the eastern United States, but one has been confirmed nesting in the state of Maine. Be alert for this species throughout the region in the proper habitat of shrubby areas associated with streams and thick stands of young spruce and fir. The song is a series of sweet slurred notes with a buzzy note at the end. To me, it sounds like "deee dooo cheery cheery cheery dooo dee dee zee" with the "zee" rising at the end. A little farther along the road (0.4 mile) at the Pratt Lake Campsite, listen for Black-throated Blue Warbler. Scan the lake for loons and the sky above for Osprey and Bald Eagle.

If you wish to continue at this point, you will find a pleasant side road to walk down at 36.9 miles, 8.8 miles beyond Pratt Lake Campsite. It is a very pretty road, known locally as Squirrel Pond Loop Road, and birding is good along its entire length. About one mile down this road where the road makes a turn to the right, a Three-toed Woodpecker was seen about 450 feet into the forest on the left. Unfortunately, the forest becomes quite swampy at that spot, and walking is difficult. Listen for Pine Grosbeak and Mourning Warbler in this area as well.

Most wilderness enthusiasts will want to continue west on Realty Road to the famed Allagash Wilderness Waterway (AWW) at 57.2 miles. To do so, you must pass through a locked gate at 44 miles that is staffed only from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M. Another good place to walk into the forest is at 56 miles, 1.2 miles before you get to the waterway. If you enter the forest here, walk straight in to the right

(north), just before the AWW entrance sign comes into view, and you will reach Glazier Brook after about 400 feet. Look for Common Merganser, and listen for Wilson's and Mourning warblers across the brook. Also, the concentration of Bay-breasted Warblers at this site is phenomenal.

It is not necessary to go as far as the Allagash River to see all the birdlife of this region. However, the Umsaskis Bridge crossing is a scenic site for a picnic, and free camping is also available there. At the bridge, listen for Warbling Vireo and Alder Flycatcher, and scan the lake for loons and Common Merganser. Moose may appear along the waterway early in the morning.

Beyond the bridge about 0.3 mile, red ribbon flags mark an entrance into the woods on the left. From the road, listen for Barred Owl, Swainson's Thrush, and Black-throated Blue and Mourning warblers. In 1985, Three-toed Woodpeckers nested in the forest on the left, and the chance of seeing Black-backed and Pileated woodpeckers here is also very good. Notice the cedar trees with the deep oval-shaped holes carved out by the Pileated Woodpeckers.

### **Practical Suggestions.**

Although Realty Road is a dirt road, it is maintained regularly and can be easily traversed by two-wheel-drive vehicles. A speed of 30 mph is reasonable along most of the road, although some bumpy sections necessitate slower speeds. North Maine Woods Association recommends against trying to average more than 20 mph.

A good map of the North Maine Woods region, showing all roads, overgrown logging roads, paths, etc., can be obtained at the Six-mile Checkpoint. A good compass is *an absolute necessity* for walking through the forest where there are no paths to guide you. You will find that spruce-fir forest looks remarkably the same in every direction. The use of bright flagging ribbon -- buy a roll or two at the Ashland Hardware Store -- to mark your route into the forest is a good precaution in the event that you do lose your sense of direction.

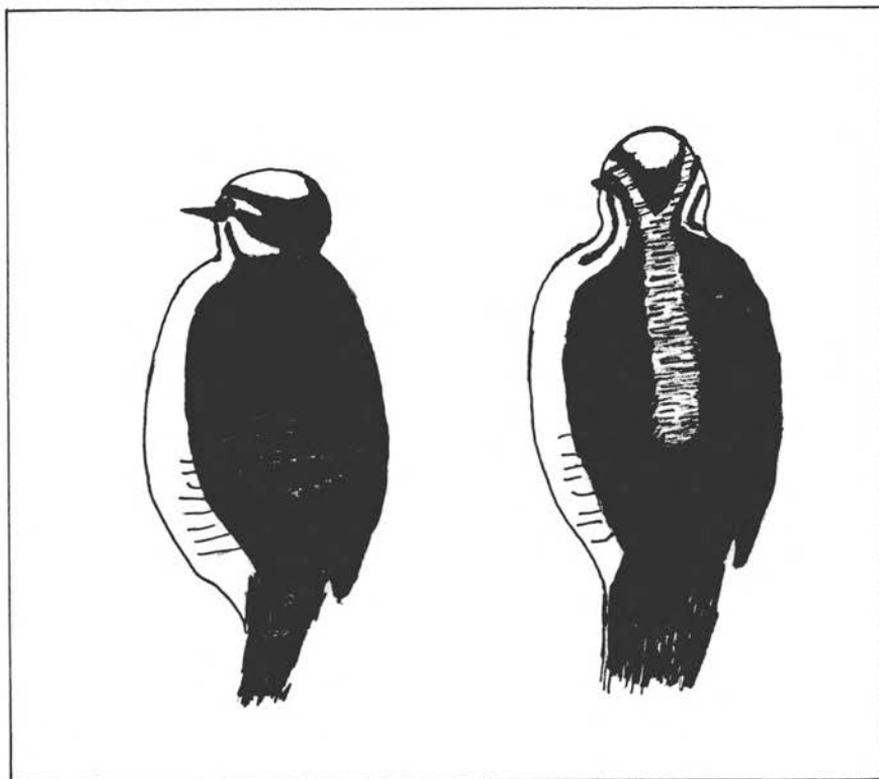
Wear heavy shoes when walking in the forest. The forest floor is quite damp, and you must be prepared to get shoes and slacks wet. The mosquitoes and black flies are most abundant in mid-June, so wear protective clothing and carry plenty of insect repellent. Headnets are advisable and are available at Bushey's Clothing Store in Ashland.

For camping information and to make campsite reservations, write to North Maine Woods Association, P. O. Box 382, Ashland, Maine 04732.

Although I have described and recommended specific roadside birding stops, it should be stressed that most of the bird species mentioned can be seen almost anywhere along the road in appropriate habitats. Therefore, if you equip yourself with map, compass, markers, insect repellents, and protective clothing,

I urge you to be adventurous and explore as much of the wonderful wilderness area of "Reality Road" as you can.

**NICHOLAS KOMAR**, a biochemistry major at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, spent six weeks in the summer of 1985 collecting data on bird territories in spruce-fir plots along the Realty Road as part of a long-term monitoring project sponsored by the state of Maine and private paper companies in an effort to learn more about the effects of pest control and logging on the wildlife of the spruce-fir ecosystem. A skilled birder since boyhood, Nick has birded for thirteen years locally in Newton, extensively in the United States, and abroad in Europe, Israel, Mexico, Costa Rica, and Peru. He served on the Bird Observer Field Studies Committee and has been a contributor to this publication.



*Black-backed Woodpecker (left) and Three-toed Woodpecker (right)*

*Illustration by Nicholas Komar*

## DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THREE-TOED AND BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS

by Nicholas Komar

The following comments on these two species of northern woodpecker (generically referred to as "three-toed") are based on observations made during the 1985 breeding season (May 25-July 5) in the spruce-fir habitat along Realty Road in Aroostook County, Maine.

Both woodpecker species are unafraid of man, as are many boreal species. Sometimes, while walking through the forest, I would hear the distinctive soft tapping of a "three-toed" and would look up to discover a Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) going about its business only a few feet away. More often than not, however, it would fly out of sight as soon as I noticed it. Rarely was I lucky enough to come across the less conspicuous Three-toed Woodpecker (*P. tridactylus*). However, the few experiences I did have with the latter species have enabled me to make some clear distinctions between the two. Although both are tolerant of an observer's presence, the Black-backed Woodpecker seemed more so and is in every respect a much more conspicuous bird than the slightly smaller and shyer Three-toed Woodpecker.

**Field Marks.** The Black-backed Woodpecker is a very beautiful bird, much more striking than its counterpart. The completely black back is actually shiny -- appearing glossy black. The back of the Three-toed is much less striking than the Black-backed's, of a very dark brown or black color, but not shiny. The major contribution to the duller aspect of the back is the presence of weak white barring (barely visible on some individuals) in the eastern subspecies of the Three-toed Woodpecker (*P. t. bacatus*). This fact confused me when I located my first Three-toed. Expecting to differentiate the two species by the clear white ladderback shown in the field guides, I was surprised when close scrutiny of this individual Three-toed revealed only faint barring on the back!

The heads of the two species can be contrasted in the same way. The Black-backed has a striking black-and-white head with a well-defined white face pattern. The bright yellow cap is also well-delineated. On the other hand, the head of the Three-toed is less striking. The black-and-white head pattern is characterized by poorly defined borders. The weak eyeline stretches faintly back over the black neck and connects with the faint barring on the upper back. This gives the appearance of the ladder-back creeping up onto the nape. Even the male's yellow cap always appears ruffled, whereas that of the Black-backed is usually immaculate. Overall, the color pattern of the Three-toed's head seems rather disorganized, whereas the Black-backed has quite a handsomely marked head.

**Calls.** The call of both species is "kik," although that of the Black-backed is slightly more explosive than that of the Three-toed. The Black-backed has another very distinctive call which sounds like a kingfisher rattle. It often makes this call in flight, and also after alighting near its nest with food, sometimes spreading its wings as it calls.

The Three-toed Woodpecker gives a similar call just before feeding young or when it is excited (as when intruders are near the nest). The call can be described as five rapid "kiks," each one getting shorter and lower-pitched but without culminating in a rattle like the Black-backed's call.

The two woodpeckers have nearly identical drumrolls. The drumroll gets noticeably faster at the end, distinguishing it from the rolls of the Hairy, Downy, or Flicker.

The most common noise you will hear from the "three-toeds" is their distinctive pecking, which sounds like someone tapping out the Morse Code! They make this noise while trying to remove rectangular flaps of bark to get at the morsels of food underneath.

**Nesting.** Another noise to be alert for is that of the young in the nest. Nestlings of both species make a continuous, high-pitched ticking noise, which gets louder when the parents call, with about 240 ticks per minute. Use this noise as a guide for locating the nest from as far as a hundred feet away. The nests of both species are marked by a small round hole, located about ten to twenty feet up the trunk of a dead softwood tree that is usually well-decorated with the lichen *Usnea* ("old-man's beard"), hanging from the dead limbs. Young of both species were still in the nest as of the first week of July (a good time to go looking).

Birders who decide to look for these woodpeckers along Realty Road will thoroughly enjoy the striking beauty and coquettish behavior of the Black-backed Woodpecker. The Three-toed Woodpecker will be much more of a challenge, but equally rewarding. With luck and careful observation, you won't have to come home with only stories of the probable "three-toed" that got away.

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## RANGE EXPANSION AND NEW BREEDING RECORD FOR THE GLOSSY IBIS IN MASSACHUSETTS

by Robert C. Humphrey

The purpose of this paper is twofold: first, to give a brief summary of the history of the Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) in North America and its northward expansion into Massachusetts; and second, to report on a new breeding location in the state.

The Glossy Ibis is believed to be a fairly recent arrival in America from the Old World. Although very little literature exists as to how and when it arrived in the new world, Audubon (1967) noted the "first intimation" of this species in the United States as a bird shot in Maryland in 1817. By 1837 he referred to them as existing in vast numbers in Mexico and in flocks, but only as a summer resident, in Texas. Specimens appeared in the Boston Market around 1844. The first documentation of a live bird in Massachusetts was around 1850 (Audubon 1967, Bent 1926).

By 1870 ibises were rare and local in the southeastern United States from Louisiana to Florida. Casual records existed north to Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ontario, and Nova Scotia (Pearson 1956). The first authentic breeding records occurred in Florida in the 1880s (Palmer 1962). The breeding range in this country was restricted to Texas and Florida for most of the first half of the 1900s. Ibises slowly expanded their breeding range into North and South Carolina in 1944 and 1947, respectively. A more rapid expansion took place in the 1950s. They first bred in New Jersey in 1955 and in Maryland in 1956 (Stewart 1957).

In 1958 there were estimated to be four hundred pairs of Glossy Ibis breeding in the United States. In 1959 over twelve hundred pairs nested at a single location in South Carolina (Palmer 1962). That year ibises also nested in at least nine other locations north of Georgia (Hailman 1959). By 1975 an estimated 6768 pairs bred along the Atlantic Coast as far north as Maine, where there were 494 nesting pairs (Sprunt 1978).

Ibises have been seen annually in Massachusetts since 1947. The first breeding record for the state was in 1974 at Clark's Island in Plymouth County. This colony peaked at 66 pairs in 1976, then declined to zero by 1984. The other major colony in the state, House Island in Manchester, grew to 107 pairs in 1977. By 1982 this colony was abandoned also. At least some of the birds relocated on Kettle Island. Ibises have nested in smaller numbers at several other locations in the state (see Figure 1). The following table gives locations and numbers of nesting pairs in Massachusetts for 1977 and 1984 and shows that ibises have added Spectacle Island and Calf Island (J. Hatch pers. comm.)

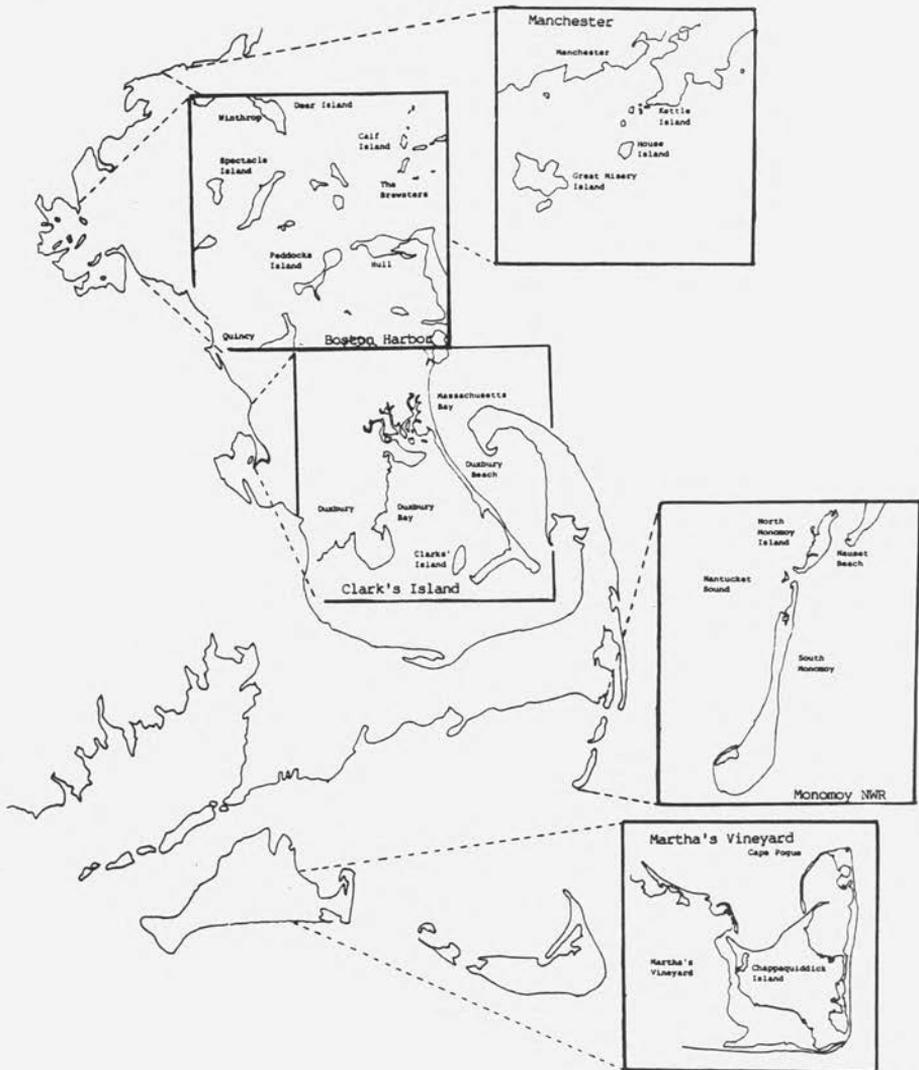


Figure 1. Nesting locations of Glossy Ibis in Massachusetts.

Map by Robert C. Humphrey.

as nesting sites. Since 1984, nesting ibises have not been reported for any other location.

### Location of Glossy Ibis nesting colonies in Massachusetts

1977 (Erwin and Korshgen 1979)

House Island, Manchester	107 pairs
Pedlocks Island, Boston Harbor	unknown
Clark's Island, Plymouth	5 *

\* only one of two subcolonies censused

1984 (Brad Blodget personal communication)

Kettle Island, Manchester	11
Calf Island, Boston Harbor	1
Spectacle Island, Boston Harbor	10
Cape Pogue, Edgartown	5

Often a large concentration of colonial nesting wading birds results in an accumulation of guano that causes vegetation to burn out, and the birds cause the destruction of their own nest substrate. This is believed to have been the reason for the abandonment of the House Island colony -- a victim of its own success (B. Blodget pers. comm.).

In 1983 a pair of Glossy Ibises were seen intermittently throughout the breeding season in the heron and egret colony on South Monomoy island (D. Holt and J. P. Lortie pers. comm.). Nesting was suspected, but no nest was ever found. In 1984 a single ibis was sighted several times during the breeding season in the South Monomoy wader colony.

On May 24, 1986, while inventorying the heron and egret colony on South Monomoy, I observed a pair of Glossy Ibises perched together in a clump of salt-spray rose (*Rosa rugosa*) with five adult Black-crowned Night-Herons (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) that had been flushed off their nest by my approach. I searched the area beneath the rose bushes but only found heron nests. I observed the birds in the same location later the same day and again searched unsuccessfully for a nest.

On May 31, 1986, I conducted a census of the South Monomoy wader colony with the assistance of several volunteers. We were in approximately the same location as on May 24 when we first sighted two Glossy Ibises in flight. After several minutes we observed one ibis land approximately four meters from a clump of rose bushes, where it stood for several minutes. While the other observers marked the location, I approached the spot. I looked under the clump of bush and discovered what I believed to be an ibis nest.

I located three nests within the rose bushes; two I believed to be heron nests. One nest was different from those of Black-crowned Night-Herons. It was

made entirely of beach grass (*Ammophila breviligulata*). Heron nests on Monomoy are typically made entirely of coarse twigs. The nest was built on the ground underneath overhanging branches of a rose bush that was part of a clump, oblong in shape, approximately 8 meters long, 6 meters wide, and 1.5 meters high at the tallest point. It contained one egg approximately the same size as a heron egg but colored a much deeper blue.

I returned to the area on July 20 and found a single Glossy Ibis fledgling in the rose clump. At first the bird appeared unable to fly. It was adult size but had white and pink color markings on the bill, head, and neck. I photographed the bird (see Figure 2), then observed it as it left the rose clump and flew a short distance to the south.

This record represents a new breeding location for the Glossy Ibis in Massachusetts. It is also significant because of the manner in which the ibises nested. Like most waders, ibises traditionally build elevated nests in trees or bushes. In the early 1980s, the Black-crowned Night-Herons nesting on South Monomoy began abandoning the main colony located in the sparse stands of willow and began nesting as single pairs or in small groups on the ground in the salt-spray rose bushes. The ibises also nested in a similar fashion. If they can successfully compete with herons for nest sites, Glossy Ibis nesting may produce less vegetation burn-out, believed to be the cause of previous colony abandonment in Massachusetts.



Figure 2. Glossy Ibis fledgling, July 20, 1986.

Photo by Robert C. Humphrey.

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**ROBERT C. HUMPHREY** is the Manager of Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge and a graduate student in wildlife biology at the University of Massachusetts doing research on the American Oystercatcher. An accomplished wildlife artist and photographer, he has won recognition in photographic competitions.

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## A BINOCULAR PRIMER FOR BIRDERS

by Leif J. Robinson

Planning to buy a new pair of binoculars? When you go to a store or look at catalogs, the options may seem overwhelming. So here is a short checklist to keep you on track.

**Assessing Your Needs.** There are scores of binocular models on the market today. They range from large to small, heavy to light, costly to inexpensive. Which one is best for you? Your choice will depend on many factors, and some of those may seem contradictory. For example, is it possible to get a sharp image over a wide field of view in a durable, inexpensive binocular? I have not yet seen that model. But if you are willing to settle for a *fairly sharp image* or a *smaller field of view* or, to *pay a bit more*, the answer will be yes.

Before choosing a binocular, first ask yourself, "How am I going to use it?" May's weekend birder at Mount Auburn Cemetery can put up with a second-rate binocular, but someone who goes afield at every possible opportunity cannot. In other words, just how much frustration and discomfort are you willing to put up with and how often? And then there is the problem of matching your binoculars to your body. Keep in mind that an instrument easily handled by a college fullback may be much too heavy for his gymnast girlfriend.

**What type to buy.** There are two principal kinds of binocular designs: porro-prism and roof-prism. The first, up to a decade or so ago, was by far the most popular. In recent years, the roof-prism models have become the rage. In general and dollar for dollar, porro-prism binoculars are bulkier but give sharper images. Roof-prism models, however, are more convenient to hold and have greater structural integrity.

**Magnification.** Except for special circumstances, I recommend that birdwatchers buy 8- to 10-power binoculars. To use less magnification is to view an unnecessarily small image; to use more is to run the risk of image jiggle due to tremors from your body.

**Diameter of objective.** For a general-purpose binocular, the front or objective lens should not be smaller than 35 millimeters nor larger than 40. Instruments in this range will give you a bright image under typical lighting conditions but will not make you carry around unnecessary bulk.

Now let's combine magnification and objective size expressed together as common binocular buzz words. For example, you will find models characterized as "7 x 35" and "10 x 40." What do these numbers mean? The first tells the magnification (here, 7 or 10 power) and the second the diameter of the front lens (35 and 40 millimeters).

**Field of view.** A binocular's field of view is nothing more than the width of the scene it shows. In general, the bigger this number the better. Most binoculars indicate the field of view as so many feet seen at 1000 yards; others give it in angular measure (degrees). I recommend a field of at least 7 degrees, which is equivalent to 370 feet at 1000 yards.

But if you wear eyeglasses, don't take what is written on the binocular as gospel (about the field of view). A binocular that is touted as "wide field" or "wide angle" (they mean the same thing) may give eyeglass wearers tunnel vision. There are quantitative ways to measure the effective field of view with and without eyeglasses, but you may not have the time or inclination to pursue them. An alternative solution is simply to compare the field seen with your glasses on and off: with the right optics for you, there shouldn't be much difference. Remember, when performing this comparison, to compress the eyepiece caps when your glasses are on and to extend them when they are off. If there are no adjustable cups, the glasses are not suitable for eyeglass wearers.

**Coatings.** Here's a nice can of worms. A coating on an optical surface reduces light scattering and gives a brighter image. Naturally, some types of coatings are better (and more expensive) than others. But there is also a more important question: how many of the optical surfaces are coated? A typical binocular has about a dozen surfaces, and a coating on all or most will vastly improve the performance. Your safest bet is to buy from a well-known manufacturer who advertises "fully coated" optics.

**Weight.** Among the best binoculars I've used, weights range from 20 to 40 ounces. That difference may not seem like much, but try carrying around the latter all day! All other factors being equal, go light!

**Manufacturers and guarantees.** My advice is to buy from a familiar brand-name company; if something goes wrong, you'll get good service, and guarantees from all these firms are virtually identical. Bausch and Lomb/Bushnell, Leitz, Swift, and Zeiss are among the best.

**Price.** Expect to pay a good deal for good optics; list prices between \$250 and \$800 are perfectly reasonable. But you need never pay list price; virtually all binoculars and spotting scopes can be purchased at discounts of 40 percent or more.

**LEIF J. ROBINSON** is a member of the Bushnell Birding Advisory Council. His book on selecting binoculars, spotting scopes, tripods, and accessories is soon to be published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. This year Leif was awarded the Klumpke-Roberts prize for science popularizations; previous winners include Isaac Asimov, Timothy Ferris, and Carl Sagan.

## STATUS OF THE CURLEW SANDPIPER IN MASSACHUSETTS

by George W. Gove

According to Cramp et al. (1983), the breeding range of the Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) extends along the high-arctic, lowland-coastal belt of Northern Siberia. The wintering range is continental Africa and coastally east to Australia and New Zealand. Terres (1980) describes two instances of nesting of the Curlew Sandpiper in North America, both near Barrow, Alaska. In June 1962, nests of two pairs were found, one with three eggs. All eggs in both nests eventually disappeared, taken, it was thought, by marauding Long-tailed and Parasitic jaegers. The second nesting was recorded during the period of July 7-14, 1972. Seven nests were found, of which two, and possibly six, fledged young.

Bull (1964) noted that the Curlew Sandpiper is a rare but regular visitor to the east coast of the United States and offered the following hypothesis to explain its occurrence here. Bull proposed that the species may migrate in the fall in an easterly or southeasterly direction from Siberia to Alaska and Canada, eventually reaching the East Coast. This is the route taken by such birds as the Long-billed Dowitcher, the Western Sandpiper, and the Buff-breasted Sandpiper. However, Nisbet has speculated that individuals of the species occurring here make a direct east-west crossing from Europe to North America during migration. Eisenmann has proposed that this species, like the Ruff, is carried across the tropical Atlantic by cyclonic storms or hurricanes while en route to Africa during the fall migration. It would then be seen in spring when it came north from Central and South America with other shorebirds.

Bailey (1955) states that the Curlew Sandpiper was of almost annual occurrence in Massachusetts from 1940 to 1954, the most likely times for its appearance being late May through early June and August through September.

In an article dealing with unusual shorebirds in Massachusetts, Petersen (1974) discusses the status of Curlew Sandpiper, noting that it is a rare but regular visitor. Donahue (1974) noted that Curlew Sandpipers were so regular on Plymouth Beach that it suggested the possibility of the same bird returning each year.

The present article updates the status of Curlew Sandpiper in Massachusetts on the basis of field records and notes appearing in *Bird Observer* since 1973 and covering the period since 1970.

The accompanying table shows all the records of Curlew Sandpiper that have appeared in *Bird Observer* from 1970 to May 1987. The records are presented as the number of individuals found at a particular location, followed in parentheses by the range of dates over which the individual was reported; for

example, 1 (May 17) indicates that one individual was seen on the seventeenth of May. The dates are separated by dashes where more than one consecutive day is involved, and these may extend into subsequent months. More than one line of data in one month of a year indicates more than one report for that month and year. For example, there were two reports for May of 1984, each of one individual.

At the bottom of the table, the total number of individuals for each month is given. If an individual was present from one month into another, it is counted separately in each month. The last row gives the number of bird-days in which Curlew Sandpipers were present. This is arrived at by multiplying the number of birds by the number of days the bird was present in a given month and then summing these numbers for each month. This number, bird-days, is an indication of the relative frequency of occurrence of Curlew Sandpiper in Massachusetts for a particular month.

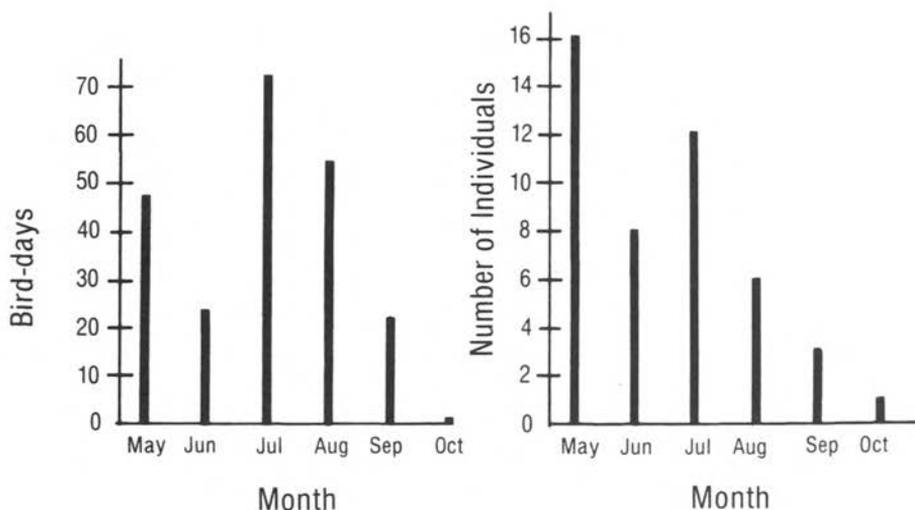
### Records of Curlew Sandpiper since 1970

YEAR	MONTH					
	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
1970	---	1 (Jun 8-15)	---	---	---	---
1971	---	---	---	---	---	---
1972	1 (May 17)	1 (Jun 11)	---	---	---	---
1973	1 (May 30)	---	---	---	---	---
	1 (May 29 through Jun 2)	---	---	---	---	---
1974	1 (May 15)	---	1 (Jul 5)	1 (Aug 1-13)	---	1 (Oct 13)
	1 (May 21)	---	1 (Jul 11-16)	---	---	---
	1 (May 12-15)	---	1 (Jul 27)	---	---	---
1975	---	---	1 (Jul 26-29)	1 (Aug 28)	---	---
1976	---	1 (Jun 15-20)	1 (Jul 9 ... through ... Sep 19)	---	---	---
1977	1 (May 28)	---	1 (Jul 14 through Aug 4)	---	---	---
1978	1 (May 18-20)	---	---	---	---	---
1979	---	---	---	1 (Aug 4-5)	---	---
1980	1 (May 16-19)	1 (Jun 3)	1 (Jul 22)	---	---	---
	1-2 (May 23-28)	---	---	---	---	---
1981	1 (May 16-26)	---	---	---	1 (Sep 13)	---
1982	---	---	---	---	---	---
1983	---	1 (Jun 10)	---	---	---	---
	---	1 (Jun 29 through Jul 2)	---	---	---	---
1984	1 (May 27-28)	1 (Jun 13-14)	1 (Jul 14)	---	---	---
	1 (May 28)	---	1 (Jul 22)	---	---	---
	---	---	1 (Jul 22 through Aug 3)	---	---	---
1985	---	---	1 (Jul 27-30)	---	1 (Sep 21-22)	---
1986	1 (May 25-26)	---	---	---	---	---
1987	1 (May 19-22)	---	---	---	---	---
Total individuals	16	8	12	6	3	1
Bird-days	46	23	72	54	22	1

These sums, the total individuals present in a month and the bird-days, are plotted on the accompanying bar graphs to represent graphically the species' occurrence in Massachusetts. From these, it can be seen that the most individuals appear during spring migration in May and June and in July during the beginning of fall migration for shorebirds or, more precisely, the postbreeding migration. The fall migration period shows the higher total bird-days. The latter may be expected. In the spring, birds do not delay in getting to the breeding areas; whereas in the fall, birds, especially juveniles, tend to linger on their migratory journey to the wintering areas. This may account for the higher number of bird-days during that season.

Note that all the records are in the months of May through October. The earliest date for Curlew Sandpiper in *Bird Observer* records is May 12 and the latest date is October 13. Bailey (1955) gives a late fall date of October 31 and also has a record of January 1, 1950, of a bird found during a Christmas Count. Note also that only one of the records presented here involved more than a single individual. During the period May 23-28, 1980, two birds of this species, both in breeding (alternate) plumage, were seen on at least one occasion in Newburyport Harbor.

#### Bird-days and Numbers of Curlew Sandpipers per month, 1970-1987



In summary, the Curlew Sandpiper is most apt to arrive in Massachusetts in May and in July. The species tends to linger longest in July and August. These would be the most productive times to look for the species.

The most favored locations to find Curlew Sandpiper are, of course, coastal locations, specifically Newburyport-Plum Island, and Outer Cape Cod, including Monomoy. Other locations where the species has been found more than once include Quincy, Plymouth Beach, and Nantucket. One could expect to find them in other similar and suitable coastal habitats. In addition, one should not overlook inland or locations near the coast. The September 1985 record was of a juvenile at Ipswich feeding in a pasture with Pectoral Sandpipers and Black-bellied Plovers.

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**GEORGE W. GOVE** joined the records staff of *Bird Observer* in 1981. This report on the Curlew Sandpiper reflects his long-standing interest in shorebirds combined with his experience as a records compiler and his facility with computers. Formerly a resident of Winchester and now living in Ashland, parent of two and grandsire of two, George has had a long career as an environmental biologist and at present works as a technical writer for Prime Computer.

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*Hawks at My Wingtip*. Bill Welch. North Country Press, Thorndike, Maine, 1987. 148 pages. Photos, maps. \$7.95 paperback.

Whenever I review a book, my first question is, "For whom is it written?" In this case the answer is, "Anyone to whom 'hawk' means more than a tick on a checklist." In short, Bill Welch's recollections of aerial encounters with hawks while flying a motorglider make for fascinating reading. He has seen and done things that you and I will most likely never do: he has flown *with* the birds and checked out their behavior and flight characteristics -- at close, even intimate, range.

Bill Welch, an aeronautical engineer, joined the New England Hawk Migration Study to combine hawkwatching with the field of aeronautics for a unique view of birds in flight. Bill followed the hawks on their east coast migrations, riding the same thermals as the raptors, in a Sperber motorglider.

Yet, *Hawks at My Wingtip* will be remembered as a brilliant or as just another so-so production, depending on the knowledge, taste, and sympathy of the reader. At times, it is a very frustrating book, for some chapters are loaded with jargon, albeit perfunctorily defined in a glossary. At other times it soars, as when Welch recalls his now-famous September 18, 1974 chase of thousands of Broad-wings from central Massachusetts to southwestern Connecticut.

While reading, I often found the text lacking, whenever I had special knowledge. Welch tends to omit information necessary for critically assessing the data he presents. Some of that is really interesting, e.g., the maximum altitude at which he found Broad-wings flying or the maximum range at which one of these birds can be seen. And every savvy student of hawks and their migration will have some problems with Welch's gospel. I was amazed not to find any mention of Colin Pennycuick, an ornithologist and glider pilot who, from his studies of raptors in Africa, established the game Welch played.

This book would have benefited greatly from a good editor. Also, the maps would have been vastly more meaningful had place names been included on them.

Is this a bad book? Absolutely not! It gives thought-provoking data and superb descriptions of hawk behavior in flight. And, it gives methods, albeit open to argument, for computing aerodynamic profiles of hawks and for determining the probability of spotting these birds.

I could not put the book down, but then, I am nutty about hawks. But I'll bet you won't be able to either, especially when you hit Chapter 6 -- "The River of Hawks."

**Leif J. Robinson** is a former editor of *Bird Observer* and a regular contributor to this journal.

**THAT VILLAIN AGAIN: THE COMMON GRACKLE**

Vince Yurkunas' account of a grackle carrying off a House Sparrow reminded me of a scene I witnessed some years ago. According to my journal, on June 26, 1981, at 8:00 A.M. while visiting Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge, I heard a young Rose-breasted Grosbeak cheeping very loudly and continuously. (I had heard it doing the same thing, though more persistently, a few days earlier.) I could not see it at first among the leaves but suddenly got a glimpse of a black bird jabbing down with its beak, and a baby bird fell to the ground. It was still breathing but had been stabbed in the throat and side of the head. Its eyes were closed when I picked it up. My attention was called upward again as I heard a very loud "chink," the usual grosbeak call, but much louder and given about once a second or perhaps faster. In looking for the bird, my binoculars picked up a Red-eyed Vireo and then a grackle which was wiping its bill on a branch. I moved the baby bird I had found away from the path a few feet to a wooded area and went off. When I returned about twenty minutes later, the baby was dead, and no other birds were around. When I talked to a friend later about this, he said that he had passed the same place the day before. At that time, there were two young, and the adult female was giving a loud call. Six or more birds were drawn to the area. He did not mention whether a grackle was among them, and he saw no aggressive acts.

Another friend told me of a grackle that came to her backyard in June 1984 and over a period of days killed ten or so birds, both young and adults, eating only the heart and brains and leaving the rest. The situation was so disturbing that her young daughter didn't want to play outside. No wonder!

Betty Porter, Concord

**MYSTERIOUS DEATH OF BABY WRENS**

We have had a wren bird house on our cedar clothesline post for about twenty years. Every year we look forward to hearing their cheery song about the middle of May. In 1986, they were heard in the area, but no wren came to our box until early in June. We watched them diving in and out with wisps of straw as usual. In the second week of July, I watched the wrens removing pieces of egg shells and thought they must be very neat. Then, a few days later one bird was singing vigorously all day. I checked the area about 7:30 P.M. and found four baby wrens on the ground too weak to fly, although they did have feathers. The parent wrens paid no attention to them at this point, and when I checked again in the morning, the babies were still there but had expired.

This experience called to mind a similar event last year. At that time, the small birds that we found abandoned on the ground didn't even have feathers. House Sparrows do bother the wrens, but are usually driven off by the adults. Also, the hole is very small -- just wren size. It's a mystery how the young birds get out of the box before they can fly. Does the parent wren push them out for some reason and then refuse to feed them? And why?

Barbara R. Hoglund, Winchester

**Editor's Note:** On page 1029 of *The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds* by John Terres (Knopf, 1980), there is a reference to a 1969 paper (by L. F. Kibler) that demonstrated that the young of House Wrens may die in the nest when heavily infested with the blood-sucking larvae of a bluebottle fly *Protocalliphora*. Carl Welty (*The Life of Birds*, Knopf, 1963, page 356) notes that *Protocalliphora*-infestation occurs in about 47 percent of House Wren nests. The Terres' account also reports, "When population of house wrens is highest and competition for territories keen, some males may puncture eggs or kill young ... which may be one of natural forms of population regulation." Also, it is not uncommon among birds (and other animals, for that matter) for young that lag behind in development or are otherwise ailing to be neglected or ousted from the nest. The remains of deceased young birds will be removed from the nest by parent birds, like eggshells or other debris, as part of the instinctive drive to maintain a clean nest (see Welty, page 333). D.R.A.

### LOVE THAT SUET!

About 10 A.M. on January 28, 1987, I noticed a female Northern Harrier trying to reach suet in a hanging holder outside my kitchen window. Her wings were held fully extended with the tail fanned as she tried to get a grip on the holder. She finally held onto a branch with one foot while the other leg hung straight down. She tried to get her bill through the openings in the wire holder, but without success. She then flew to a nearby dead pine tree and then again back to the suet. Just next to the beef suet holder, I had another type of feeder with a mixture of suet, corn meal, and peanut butter formed into a solid cylindrical cake. This was readily accessible, as the holder was open at the top. However, the harrier made no attempt to eat this.

At noon I saw the harrier again on the suet feeder, and this time it looked as though she had actually got a piece.

Edith Andrews, Nantucket

## A BARN SWALLOW IS UNGLUED

An urgent call from a neighbor brought us to a young, goo-smearred Barn Swallow that had been discovered hanging upside down from a strip of flypaper in the horse barn. The swallow was bright-eyed but thoroughly glued together, staring up at us from a box. We hurried home, set up a small fan, and faced him into it while we rubbed him down with mineral spirits. (Luckily, the flypaper roll listed mineral oil as its main ingredient, and the spirits did the trick; the fan kept him from inhaling the solvent. When the glue had all been removed, we washed him with Dawn (the detergent of choice for oiled birds) and rinsed him under the tap. Then we rolled him in paper towels, gave him a dollop of Nutrical (a high-calorie veterinary food supplement), and left him to reflect on his strange short life thus far.

In the morning, he was ready for some June bugs, caught on the screens the night before. crickets and grasshoppers, moths and mealworms -- all disappeared, and still he was expectant. I dipped bits of steak in milk, then scrambled him an egg, and before long he was trying his wings. This intrigued my parakeet, Edie, who flew with him, then sidled up to him and preened his head feathers, warbling softly to him. They sat shoulder to shoulder and preened. The swallow was interested in Edie's yellow beak and pecked at it repeatedly. Edie was indulgent.

By evening, a change had come over the swallow. No longer sitting quietly in his cage, he bounced and flapped around, looking for a way out. All of the birds I have nursed are alike when ready to go. From calm resignation, they shift suddenly to the wild creatures they are. Their apparent tameness vanishes, and they lose all patience with makeshift cages and perching on fingers. The morning of the second day, I let him out of the cage to strengthen his wings. All day he ate and flew and chirped at the swallows outside. That afternoon, I gave him nine mealworms, put him in a box, and drove him to the place he had been found. No swallows were in sight. I opened the box, and he rose quickly above the treetops, circling and diving. Suddenly the air filled with Barn Swallows, swooping and chattering -- a convoy of support. It was a fine moment.

Julie Zickefoose, Hadlyme, Connecticut

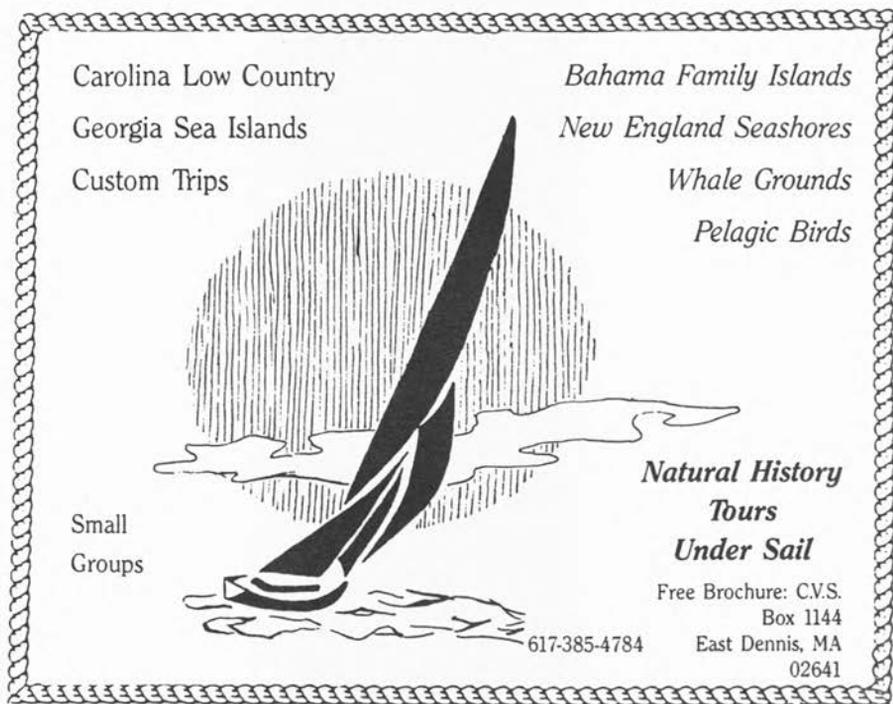
## RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD AS REFEREE

Sunday, May 17, 1987, was a big day for spring migrants. Pat Comas and I met Bob Stymeist as we were looking for a Lincoln's Sparrow at Mt. Auburn Cemetery. As we paused briefly by the bridge at Spectacle Pond, I saw movement under a large rhododendron. Suddenly, two catbirds tumbled out of the bush onto the pavement. We thought at first that they were mating, but quickly realized they were fighting and quite viciously at that. They kept putting

out their legs to grip each other's chest or head as they twisted and turned over, wings flapping, beaks biting. A third catbird appeared, walking around about a foot away from the two combatants, looking very disinterested in what was going on. I had the feeling that "she" might be a female they were fighting over.

Suddenly, just as it seemed a gory death was about to occur, the fight was over. A Red-winged Blackbird had flown down from a nearby tree. He flew directly between the two fighting catbirds. The fight stopped immediately, and all three catbirds flew off, leaving the blackbird standing alone on the pavement for a few more moments. Had the fight annoyed him or the ruckus disturbed the peace of a beautiful day? Whatever the reason, it provided us with an interesting and happy ending to the angry situation we had been witnessing.

Sandy Selesky, Westford



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## EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS FALL HAWK WATCH

The Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch (EMHW) will maintain a consecutive-day hawkwatch on the summit of Wachusett Mountain in Princeton from September 1 through October 12, continuing on weekends through November 22, if the number of volunteer observers permits. Help is especially needed for weekdays at Wachusett from September 21 through October 12, the peak period for Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks migration.

The EMHW will also conduct coordinated watches on five week-ends this fall: September 12-13, 19-20, 26-27, October 3-4, and 24-25. Volunteers are needed for sites throughout eastern Massachusetts on any and all of these ten dates. Special attention will be focused on inland sites on September 12, 13, 19, and 20, prime Broad-wing migration time, and again on October 24 and 25, the best dates for large buteos and accipiters. Coastal sites will be emphasized on September 19, 20, 26, and 27, the peak period for small falcon and accipiter migration. Obviously, many volunteers are needed on the weekend of September 19 and 20.

Volunteers are needed to report the level of hawk migration activity from any site. Select a site near your home or contact the EMHW coordinator for recommendations as to the best sites where coverage is needed.

You don't have to be a hawk-identification expert to participate and report. Reporting the number of hawks seen is the critical requirement, not necessarily the identification. If you would like to learn more about hawk migration and identification, the EMHW coordinator can team you with a more experienced hawkwatcher at any of a number of sites across our region, from the Cape to the Connecticut River Valley.

If you wish to participate, contact Paul M. Roberts, 254 Arlington Street, Medford, MA 02155, or call 617-483-4263 after 8:00 P.M.

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## **BIRD OBSERVER WORKSHOPS FOR FALL AND EARLY WINTER**

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### **FALL LOOK-ALIKES: Confusing Species Pairs** OCTOBER 1987

Many North American bird species have "sibling" species or species counterparts that they closely resemble. Oftentimes these groups create identification problems for birders, especially in the fall. This workshop will focus on a variety of these puzzlers, and how to sort them out. Examples will include loons, female ducks, immature hawks, juvenile sandpipers, immature gulls, and a number of passerine species pairs. A field trip to a selected birding area will provide field experience to apply toward ideas presented in the lecture.

### **WINGS OVER THE WATER: Fall Coastal Migration** NOVEMBER 1987

Thousands of waterbirds annually pass the Massachusetts coast during their passage southward to wintering areas in the southern United States and beyond. The contingent includes loons, grebes, gannets, cormorants, waterfowl, shorebirds, jaegers, gulls, terns, and alcids. Each of these groups has evolved specialized strategies and routes to successfully reach their winter destinations. This workshop will address the different aspects of fall waterbird migration as well as assist workshop participants in learning how to recognize some of these travelers. A field trip to areas where migrating waterbirds may be observed will provide an opportunity for direct experience with some of the notions presented in the lecture session.

### **QUABBIN AND ITS WINTER WILDLIFE: Winter Ecology**

JANUARY 1988

Because of its popularity last winter, the Quabbin workshop is being offered again. In this workshop details of some of Quabbin's more notable winter residents will illustrate how each is adapted to survive the rigors of winter. In addition to well-known inhabitants such as Bald Eagles, Wild Turkeys, Common Ravens, and Coyotes, some attention will also focus on less conspicuous forms of life that make this area so interesting, even in winter. A segment of the lecture will consider how wildlife faces winter, not only at Quabbin, but in New England in general. A field trip to the area will provide participants with a chance to explore the Quabbin wilderness on foot and to observe some of its more secretive residents.

Wayne R. Petersen will present all three workshops. Further details will be announced. If you have questions, please call 293-5262 (Hanover).

# FIELD RECORDS

## MARCH 1987



by George W. Gove and Robert H. Stymeist

The March lion roared at both ends of the month, but the lamb dominated most of the time. The temperature averaged 38.5 degrees, just 0.1 degree above normal. The high was 65 degrees on March 25, and the lowest mark was 12 degrees on March 10. Precipitation totaled 4.27 inches, 0.14 inch more than normal. On the first day of the month 1.72 inches fell, and on the last day 1.89 inches were recorded. Snowfall totaled 3.5 inches, 4.1 inches less than normal. Flurries were quite frequent, though the most on any day was 1.2 inches on March 2. The seasonal total became 38.4 inches, just 2.0 inches less than normal. The peak gust of 53 mph on March 31 was the strongest since 63 mph last December 19. At Blue Hill in Milton a gust of 87 mph from the SSE was the strongest since Hurricane Gloria in September 1985.

### LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

The Pacific Loon first reported in January continued through March 9 at Sagamore Beach. The build-up of Red-necked Grebes was especially noteworthy along the south shore with counts of over 100 at North Scituate and over 200 at Hull early in the month. Northern Gannets were moving early in the month with 600 recorded during a two-hour watch at Race Point in Provincetown. At Brant Rock in Marshfield a total of 287 adult gannets was seen sitting in a calm sea not far from shore.

Great Blue Herons were back on territory at the Suasco area in Westboro where 36 birds were present at the end of the month. The first Snowy Egrets were noted along the marshes at Logan Airport on March 29.

Snow Geese were noted from two locations with over 50 birds found in Newburyport on March 25. Over 2000 Brant were tallied in Boston Harbor, though counts of this species were down in number at other traditional locations. Wood Ducks were back in all their usual haunts, and the number of Green-winged Teal increased during the month, with a "Eurasian" type reported from East Orleans.

The first Blue-winged Teal were reported at the end of the month, later than usual, and only 4 individuals were noted. A Eurasian Wigeon continued at Ryders Cove in Chatham through March 21.

In Bristol County good numbers of Canvasbacks were seen with other good counts in Harwich and in Lakeville. Over 200 Redheads were tallied at Nantucket and others were reported from Lakeville, Harwich and Plymouth. Ring-necked Ducks were on the move and 155 were counted at the end of the month in the Sudbury River Valley. The King Eider and Harlequin Ducks continued all month at Winthrop. Another King Eider was found along Sagamore Beach, and Harlequins were noted from Rockport, Gloucester and Wellfleet. The Oldsquaw flight at Nantucket continued throughout the month, though far fewer than in December.

A maximum of just 5 Barrow's Goldeneye was found in Newburyport Harbor during the month; others were noted in Sagamore, Hull and Chatham. Common Mergansers were found in good numbers in many locations, and about 6000 Red-breasted Mergansers were reported off Truro. R.H.S.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
Red-throated Loon				
1-8, 7	Winthrop, P'town	2, 1	J. Cumming, D. Morimoto	
22, 30	Nantucket	8, 8	E. + C. Andrews	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
<b>Pacific Loon</b>				
1-9 from Jan.	Sagamore Beach	1	S. Dinsmore + v.o.	
<b>Common Loon</b>				
4, 7	Salisbury, P.I.	12, 11	M. Lynch#, R. Humphrey	
21	Plymouth	29	BBC (J. Barton)	
24-30	Crane Reservation	5-7	D. Rimmer	
29	Salisbury	5	D. Chickering	
<b>Pied-billed Grebe</b>				
thr	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	8 max 3/8-10	S. Dinsmore + v.o.	
8, 13	Lakeville, Norton	1, 1	K. Holmes, K. Ryan	
30	Wayland	1	E. Salmela	
<b>Horned Grebe</b>				
8, 29	Sagamore	45, 200	R. Stymeist#, W. Petersen#	
8, 21	Winthrop	2-3, 4	J. Cumming	
22, 28	Nantucket, Salisbury	6, 20	E. + C. Andrews, BBC (S. Whittum)	
<b>Red-necked Grebe</b>				
thr	Dennis (Corp. B.)	12 max	J. Aylward + v.o.	
6, 7	N. Scituate, Hull	100, 200	E. Salmela, P. Thayer	
7, 8	Marshfield, Winthrop	30, 28	D. Taylor, J. Cumming	
13, 14	Gloucester, Salisbury	10, 1	R. Buchsbaum, I. Giriunas	
22, 23	Winthrop, Manomet	32, 46	J. Cumming, R. Titus	
29	Winthrop, Gloucester	45, 68	J. Cumming, G. Gove	
<b>Northern Gannet</b>				
4	P'town (Race Pt)	600 in 2 hrs	S. Dinsmore	
7	P'town (Race Pt)	5	D. Morimoto	
8, 13	Brant Rock, Nahant	287, 16	R. Stymeist#, J. Quigley	
21, 28	Truro, Salisbury	80, 30	D. Donovan#, BBC (S. Whittum)	
<b>Great Cormorant</b>				
7, 8	Newburyport, Monomoy	46, 40	BBC (F. Bouchard), B. Nikula	
13	Nahant	100	T. Aversa	
<b>Double-crested Cormorant</b>				
6	Newburyport	12	D. Chickering	
21	Falmouth	6	BBC (J. Barton)	
<b>Great Blue Heron</b>				
6, 7	Wareham, Wellesley	25, 1	E. Salmela, R. Forster	
7, 8	Watertown, Westport	1, 6	M. Hall, L. Taylor#	
24, 27	Brookline, P.I.	1, 1	B. Hallett, R. Humphrey	
28, 29	Westboro (Suasco Dam)	24, 36	G. Gove#, M. Lynch#	
<b>Snowy Egret</b>				
29	E. Boston (Logan)	2	N. Smith	
<b>Black-crowned Night-Heron</b>				
8, 15	Brighton, Eastham	3, 5	J. Paputseanos, J. Aylward	
29	Nantucket	17	E. Andrews	
<b>Mute Swan</b>				
8	Plymouth, Lakeville	23, 1	R. Stymeist#, K. Holmes	
8, 17	Westport, Quincy	40, 9	D. Morimoto, K. Ryan	
<b>Snow Goose</b>				
1, 28-29	Bolton Flats	1, 1	D. Donovan, M. Lynch#	
25	Newburyport	50+	BBC (A. Blaisdell)	
<b>Brant</b>				
8	Boston Harbor	2000	BBC (J. Barton)	
11	Plymouth	100+	K. Anderson	
21	Eastham, Wellfleet	45, 15	D. Donovan, E. Salmela	
21, 28	Winthrop, Ipswich	400, 18	J. Cumming, D. Rimmer	
<b>Canada Goose</b>				
3	S. Dartmouth	140	LCES (R. Marshall)	
7	Middleboro	200	W. Petersen	
7, 11	Newburyport, P.I.	450+, 381	M. Lynch#, R. Humphrey	
12	Halifax	400	K. Anderson	
20	W. Bridgewater	250	K. Ryan	
<b>Wood Duck</b>				
7	Lakeville, Holliston	2, 1	W. Petersen, R. Hildreth	
8, 10	Fall River, Bolton Flats	1, 3	J. Gordon#, E. Salmela	
15, 29	Bolton Flats	7, 10	D. Donovan, M. Lynch#	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
Wood Duck (continued)				
26, 28	Medford, Ipswich	3, 6	P. Roberts, J. Berry	
28	GMNWR, SR Valley	8, 13	T. Aversa, R. Forster	
Green-winged Teal				
8	S. Monomoy, Dartmouth	12+, 2	B. Nikula, G. Gove#	
11, 13, 27	P.I.	29, 85, 158	R. Humphrey	
21	Halifax	5	W. Petersen#	
29	W. Bridgewater	30	W. Petersen#	
25, 28	Millis, Newburyport	24, 12	B. Cassie#, BBC (S. Whittum)	
"Eurasian" Teal				
25	E. Orleans(Pochet inlet)	1 m	A. Williams	
American Black Duck				
thr	S. Dartmouth	333 max 3/11	LCES (R. Marshall)	
4, 11, 27	P.I.-Newburyport	65, 839, 227	R. Humphrey	
7	Halifax-Middleboro	800	W. Petersen	
7	Salisbury, Newbypt, P.I.	250, 300, 200+	M. Lynch#	
Mallard				
20	W. Bridgewater	225	K. Ryan	
29	Bolton Flats	57	M. Lynch#	
Northern Pintail				
4, 9, 11	P.I.-Newburyport	2, 12, 27	R. Humphrey	
7	Holliston, Halifax	1, 2	R. Hildreth, W. Petersen	
7, 8	Middleboro, S. Monomoy	4, 5+	W. Petersen, B. Nikula	
8, 13	Westport, P.I.	30, 39	D. Morimoto, R. Humphrey	
19, 20	W. Bridgewater	6, 20	K. Ryan#	
23	Concord	3	R. Forster	
Other reports of 1 or 2 birds from a wide area.				
Blue-winged Teal				
28, 29	Sudbury, W. Bridgewater	2, 2	R. Forster, W. Petersen#	
Northern Shoveler				
19, 28	Chatham, Newbypt	2, 1	S. Dinsmore, J. Cumming	
Gadwall				
thr	Salem	10 max 3/23	J. Berry	
6	S. Dartmouth	4	LCES (R. Marshall)	
8-10, 8	Plymouth, S. Monomoy	20, 22	S. Dinsmore, B. Nikula	
28	Sudbury, Arlington	1, 1	R. Forster, L. Taylor	
Eurasian Wigeon				
7-21	Chatham	1 m	B. Nikula + v.o.	
American Wigeon				
7	Belmont, Chatham	18, 3	R. Stymeist, D. Morimoto	
10, 20	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	30, 52	S. Dinsmore, B. Cassie#	
Canvasback				
5, 7	Harwich, Lakeville	180, 20	S. Dinsmore, W. Petersen	
8	Assonet, Westport	200+, 230	L. Taylor#, D. Morimoto	
9, 11	Lakeville, S. Dartmouth	40, 29	D. Briggs, LCES (R. Marshall)	
21, 28	Chatham, Dennis	12, 13	D. Donovan#, S. Clifton	
Redhead				
5, 9	Narwich, Lakeville	7, 1	S. Dinsmore, D. Briggs	
14	Nantucket, Plymouth	200+, 11	J. Barton#, W. Petersen	
Ring-necked Duck				
thr	Plymouth (Billington Sea)	90 max 3/14	W. Petersen + v.o.	
thr	Lakeville	65 max 3/7	W. Petersen + v.o.	
19, 21	Waltham, Halifax	5, 175	D. Gorgone, W. Petersen	
28	SR Valley	155	R. Forster	
Greater Scaup				
7	Lakeville, Newbypt	30, 6	W. Petersen, J. Berry#	
18	Salisbury, Newbypt	3, 18	M. Lynch, S. Carroll	
22	Falmouth	2000	BBC (J. Barton)	
Lesser Scaup				
7, 8	Lakeville, Plymouth	6, 15	W. Petersen, S. Dinsmore	
21	Falmouth	20	BBC (J. Barton)	
Common Eider				
7, 15	Salisbury, Winthrop	35, 67	M. Lynch#, D. Chickering	
21	Plymouth	2500	BBC (J. Barton)	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
King Eider				
thr	Winthrop	1 m	J. Cumming + v.o.	
1-8	Sagamore	1 imm m	S. Dinsmore	
Harlequin Duck				
6, 8	Rockport, Winthrop	3, 2	D. Chickering, J. Cumming	
13, 21	Gloucester, Wellfleet	2 m, 1	R. Buchsbaum, D. Donovan	
Oldsquaw				
thr	Nantucket	1000s each evening	E. Andrews + v.o.	
7	Newburyport-P.I.	410	M. Lynch#	
Black Scoter				
1, 14	Gloucester, Nant.	20+, 50	J. Berry#, BBC (J. Barton)	
23	Scusset Beach	15	R. Titus	
Surf Scoter				
1, 7	Gloucester, Salisbury	10, 3	J. Berry#, M. Lynch#	
8, 14	Winthrop, Nantucket	4, 500+	J. Cumming, BBC (J. Barton)	
White-winged Scoter				
1, 7	Gloucester, Salisbury	10, 20	J. Berry#, M. Lynch#	
14	Nantucket	500+	BBC (J. Barton)	
Common Goldeneye				
7	Newbypt-Salisbury	410	M. Lynch#	
7, 11	Lakeville, S. Dartmouth	80, 16	W. Petersen, LCES (R. Marshall)	
Barrow's Goldeneye				
thr	Newbypt, Sagamore	5 max, 1 m	v.o., S. Dinsmore	
6, 19	Hull, Chatham	1 m, 4	P. Thayer, S. Dinsmore	
Bufflehead				
thr	S. Dartmouth (Allens Pd)	38 max	LCES (R. Marshall)	
7, 8	Newbypt, Lakeville	125, 35	M. Lynch#, K. Holmes	
Hooded Merganser				
8	Plymouth, Holliston	9, 2	S. Dinsmore, R. Hildreth	
9, 12	Lakeville, Cambridge	8, 2	D. Briggs, O. Komar#	
12, 14	Salisbury, W. Newbury	13, 3	K. Wyman, BBC (I. Giriunas)	
21	Belmont, Halifax	2, 2	J. + R. Goetze, W. Petersen	
Common Merganser				
7	Newbypt, Watertown	40, 20	M. Lynch#, M. Hall	
8	Plymouth, Assonet	126, 175+	R. Stymeist#, L. Taylor#	
15, 21	Bolton Flats, Belmont	19, 6	D. Donovan, J. + R. Goetze	
27, 28	Millis, Arlington	8, 73	M. Kasprzyk, L. Taylor	
28, 30	W. Boylston, S. Carver	29, 14	M. Lynch#, J. Shaw	
Red-breasted Merganser				
7	Salisbury, Truro	326, 6000+	F. Bouchard#, D. Morimoto	
7	Cambridge	4	G. Gove#	
8	Boston Harbor	500	BBC (J. Barton)	
28	GMNWR	1	T. Aversa	
30	Ipswich (Cranes Beach)	75+	D. Rimmer	
Ruddy Duck				
7	Cambridge (Charles R)	1	J. Paputseanos	

#### VULTURES THROUGH SHRIKES

Among earlier than normal migrant raptors were a Turkey Vulture on March 6, an Osprey on March 8, a Sharp-shinned Hawk on March 11, and a Cooper's Hawk on March 7. Many reports of Bald Eagles were received with about half of the reports not coming from the usual areas. A Red-tailed Hawk spent late fall and the winter on Boston Common, and on March 12 a crowd stood in a circle around the hawk and watched as it dined on one of the local pigeons. Two Golden Eagles were reported; the two reports from Plymouth County may be of the same individual. A Gyrfalcon was photographed on South Monomoy.

Piping Plovers and American Oystercatchers appeared on time. Unusual for March was the fact that Purple Sandpipers were not reported from any of the customary locations, probably reflecting nonreporting rather than nonoccurrence. A dowitcher species was noted in Hyannisport where a Long-billed Dowitcher had been seen in December and January. Laughing Gulls were reported about a month early from the Cape although last year's early date was March 17. Two Least Terns were reported about six weeks early at Eastham. There was an unconfirmed report that 3 Least Terns were seen the

previous week, and some had been noted in Rhode Island at about that time. An adult Common or Mew Gull was seen at Raccoon Island in Quincy where one was present a year ago from December 1985 to March 1986.

Great Horned Owls were noted nesting at many locations, and Pileated Woodpeckers were seen at eleven locations. An early Tree Swallow was noted on March 8 before the general arrival of the species in the third and fourth weeks of March. A Varied Thrush was seen again at a feeder in Dedham where it had been seen occasionally since January. Seven Bohemian Waxwings were noted in North Truro on March 21; 19 were photographed there last March 4. G.W.G.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
<b>Turkey Vulture</b>				
6, 14	Wellesley, Easton	1, 1	E. Sanders, K. Ryan	
19, 22	Southbridge, Hardwick	4, 3	D. Donovan, M. Lynch	
27	Milton, Barnstable	11, 2	N. Smith, A. Williams	
8-30	10 individuals reported from 10 locations.			
<b>Osprey</b>				
8, 23	Chatham, Lakeville	1, 2	B. Nikula, R. Turner	
25, 27	Nantucket, Milton	2, 1	fide E. Andrews, N. Smith	
<b>Bald Eagle</b>				
thr	Newburyport-Amesbury	1 ad	K. Larmand#	
15, 22	Newburyport-Amesbury	3, 1 imm	J. MacDougall, D. Donovan#	
8; 8, 15	Westport; Quabbin (G40)	1 ad; 7, 3	G. Gove#; M. Lynch	
8, 8-23	P'town, Lakeville	1 imm, 1	J. Aylward#, v.o.	
19, 24	Sudbury, Shrewsbury	1 imm, 1 imm	R. Walton#, C. Racine	
<b>Northern Harrier</b>				
11, 27	S. Dartmouth	3, 6	LCES (R. Marshall)	
22, 28	Salisbury, Marshfield	2, 2	D. Donovan#, R. Abrams	
<b>Sharp-shinned Hawk</b>				
11, 14	Norwood, N. Middleboro	1, 1	O. Komar, K. Holmes	
29	Eastham	20	C. Goodrich	
17-31	8 individuals reported from 8 locations.			
<b>Cooper's Hawk</b>				
7, 17	Newburyport, Needham	1, 1	K. Hamilton, W. Petersen	
29	Westboro	1	M. Lynch	
<b>Northern Goshawk</b>				
8	P.I., Newburyport	1 imm, 1 ad	P. Roberts	
8	S. Wellfleet	2 imm	R. Prescott	
15, 17	Middleboro, Quabbin (G40)	2, 3	BBC (D. Davis), M. Lynch	
10-29	9 individuals reported from 9 locations.			
<b>Red-shouldered Hawk</b>				
3-25, 7	E. Middleboro, Lakeville	2-3, 8	K. Anderson, W. Petersen	
19, 29	Easton, Holliston	2, 2	K. Ryan, R. Hildreth	
7-30	1 or 2 individuals reported from each of 7 locations.			
<b>Red-tailed Hawk</b>				
thr	E. Middleboro	1 or 2	K. Anderson	
12	Boston Common	1 ad	M. Murphy	
8, 15	Bridgewater-Middleboro	7, 5	K. Holmes#	
<b>Rough-legged Hawk</b>				
4-12, 8	E. Middleboro, Halifax	1, 3 lt + 2 dk	K. Anderson, L. Taylor#	
8-29	Bridgewater-Middleboro	6 max (2 lt + 4 dk)	v.o.	
8, 15	Marshfield, Salisbury	2, 3 lt + 1 dk	R. Stymeist#, P. Roberts	
<b>Golden Eagle</b>				
3, 8	Whitman, Quabbin (G40)	1, 1 ad	D. Briggs#, S. Peak	
14	Brockton	1 ad	S. Peak	
<b>American Kestrel</b>				
7	Salisbury, Holliston	5, 2	BBC (F. Bouchard), R. Hildreth	
29	Eastham, Milford	20, 3	C. Goodrich, R. Hildreth	
<b>Merlin</b>				
30	Ipswich	1	D. Rimmer	
<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>				
17-24	Boston	2	T. Billings	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
<b>Gyr Falcon</b>				
8	S. Monomoy	1 ph	B. Nikula	
<b>Ruffed Grouse</b>				
7, 21	Halifax, Easton	1, 3	W. Petersen, K. Ryan	
23, 27	Canton, E. Middleboro	3, 2	R. Titus, K. Anderson	
<b>Wild Turkey</b>				
21, 22	Petersham	14, 10	M. Lynch	
<b>American Coot</b>				
8-10, 14	Plymouth, Marshfield	200, 2	S. Dinsmore, M. Walsh	
<b>Black-bellied Plover</b>				
6, 8	S. Dartmouth, Boston	1, 3	LCES (R. Marshall), BBC(J. Barton)	
<b>Piping Plover</b>				
24, 27	S. Dartmouth, Ipswich	2, 2m + 2f	LCES (R. Marshall), D. Rimmer	
27	Duxbury, Chatham	1, 2	F. Bygate, W. Bailey	
29	Nantucket	2	fide E. Andrews	
<b>Killdeer</b>				
6, 7	Salisbury	1, 4	D. Chickering, R. Forster	
8, 15	Halifax, Ipswich	2, 2	J. Gordon#, D. Rimmer	
15, 28	Easton, Marshfield	9, 5	K. Ryan, R. Abrams	
<b>American Oystercatcher</b>				
21, 30; 29	Chatham; N. Monomoy	1, 5; 2	W. Bailey; B. Nikula	
<b>Greater Yellowlegs</b>				
25, 31; 27	Hyannisport; E. Orleans	2, 4; 1	S. Clifton; A. Williams	
<b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b>				
31	Hyannisport	2	S. Clifton	
<b>Sanderling</b>				
4-18	P.I.-Newburyport	19 max 3/4	R. Humphrey	
25-30	Ipswich	28 max	D. Rimmer	
<b>Purple Sandpiper</b>				
8	Boston	3	BBC (J. Barton)	
<b>Dunlin</b>				
28	Salisbury	10	J. Cumming	
<b>dowitcher species</b>				
25, 31	Hyannisport	1	S. Clifton	
<b>Common Snipe</b>				
15, 28	Newbypt, W. Newbury	1, 8	E. Salmela, BBC (S. Whittum)	
28, 29	Marshfield, Easton	10, 12	R. Abrams, K. Ryan	
<b>American Woodcock</b>				
7	Salisbury	1	BBC (R. Vernon)	
8	Belmont-Cambridge	12	S. Sanders	
12	N. Middleboro	3	K. Holmes	
15	Bridgewater	12	BBC (D. Davis)	
28	Marshfield, Ipswich	10, 8	R. Abrams, D. Rimmer	
6-31	1 or 2 individuals reported from each of 8 locations.			
<b>Laughing Gull</b>				
27	Chatham	20	W. Bailey	
<b>Little Gull</b>				
25	Newburyport	1	BBC(A. Blaisdell)	
<b>Common Black-headed Gull</b>				
8-22	Winthrop	11 max 3/20	v.o.	
15, 17	Newburyport, Quincy	1 ad, 2	W. Petersen, R. Abrams	
<b>Common Gull</b>				
15	Quincy (Raccoon I.)	1 ad	R. Abrams	
<b>Iceland Gull</b>				
thr	Nantucket	14 max	E. Andrews	
15	Newburyport	20	E. Salmela	
<b>Lesser Black-backed Gull</b>				
14	Lynn	1 ad	J. Quigley	
<b>Glaucous Gull</b>				
13, 15	Newbypt, Gloucester	1, 1	E. Salmela, R. Buchsbaum	
<b>Least Tern</b>				
16	Eastham	2	L. MacIvor	
<b>Dovekie</b>				
8	Chatham	1 oiled	P. Bailey	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
Razorbill				
30	Nantucket	1	E.+ C. Andrews	
Black Guillemot				
7, 13	Cape Ann, Gloucester	8, 4	S. Clifton, R. Buchsbaum	
13-14	Nahant	2	J. Quigley	
Common Barn-Owl				
17	Nantucket	1	D. Beattie	
Eastern Screech-Owl				
thr, 3, 26	Easton	1 red, 1 gray, 1 red	K. Ryan	
8, 15	Norwell, Lakeville	1 dead, 2	R. Stymeist#, BBC (D. Davis)	
Great Horned Owl				
thr	Bridgewater, Ipswich	pr at nest, pr	W. Petersen, J. Berry	
8-24, 9	E. Middleboro, P.I.	1-3, 1	K. Anderson, R. Humphrey	
15	Lakeville-Bridgewater	6	BBC (D. Davis)	
22	PRNWR	pr at nest	D. Donovan#	
29	Westboro	1 on nest	M. Lynch#	
Snowy Owl				
7, 14	Salisbury	3, 3	R. Forster, P. Roberts	
8, 26	E. Boston	13, 6	N. Smith	
11, 27	S. Dartmouth	1, 1	LCES (R. Marshall)	
14-25	Nantucket	1	fide E. Andrews	
29	N. Monomoy, P'town	2, 1	B. Nikula, fide R. Prescott	
Barred Owl				
7	Hamilton	1	BBC (F. Bouchard)	
15	Lakeville	1	BBC (D. Davis)	
14, 28	Boxford, Quabbin (G40)	5, 6	J. MacDougall, M. Lynch#	
24, 27	Wakefield, Holliston	1, 1	R. Titus, R. Hildreth	
Long-eared Owl				
14	Nahant	1	J. Quigley	
Short-eared Owl				
8, 15	N. Truro, E. Boston	1, 1	J. Aylward + v.o., B. Fay	
18, 24	S. Dartmouth	1, 1	LCES (R. Marshall)	
20, 21	Quincy	1, 1	T. Aversa	
28	Salisbury	1	BBC (S. Whittum)	
Northern Saw-whet Owl				
14	Hamilton	1	BBC (I. Giriunas)	
15	Middleboro	1	BBC (D. Davis)	
21, 28	Chatham, Quabbin (G40)	1, 1	B. Nikula, M. Lynch#	
Belted Kingfisher				
28	Ipswich	3	J. Berry	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				
28	Quabbin (G40)	1	M. Lynch#	
Downy Woodpecker				
26	Medford	4	P. Roberts	
Hairy Woodpecker				
thr	Nantucket	1 m + 1 f	E. Andrews	
8, 26	Quabbin (G43), Medford	3, 3	M. Lynch#, P. Roberts	
Northern Flicker				
7, 28	Newburyport, Peabody	7, 4	M. Lynch#, D. Hill	
28	Marshfield	3	R. Abrams	
Pileated Woodpecker				
thr	Acton	1 or 2	C. Reeves	
8, 15	Quabbin (G40)	5, 3	M. Lynch#	
6-29	9 individuals reported from 9 locations.			
Eastern Phoebe				
14, 23	Berlin, N. Middleboro	5, 2	D. Donovan, K. Holmes	
25	E. Middleboro, Pembroke	2, 2	K. Anderson, D. Ludlow	
29	Concord, Sudbury	1, 1	G. Gove#	
29	Wayland, Milford	1, 2	G. Gove#, R. Hildreth	
29	Bolton, ONWR	2, 2	M. Lynch#	
Horned Lark				
7, 9	Salisbury, Sagamore	14, 40	M. Lynch#, R. Stymeist#	
14	Salisbury	18	BBC (I. Giriunas)	
15	Bridgewater	30	BBC (D. Davis)	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
Tree Swallow				
8	Sagamore	3	S. Dinsmore	
26, 27	W. Bridgewater, P.I.	8, 2	K. Ryan, R. Humphrey	
28, 29	Concord, S. Hanson	35, 25	R. Forster, W. Petersen#	
American Crow				
15	Bridgewater	111	BBC (D. Davis)	
Fish Crow				
8-29, 14	Hanson, Mattapan	6 max, 25	W. Petersen, O. Komar	
19, 26	E. Middleboro, Middleboro	1, 1	K. Anderson, D. Briggs	
Common Raven				
7, 15	Quabbin	1, 2	J. Cumming, M. Lynch#	
15	Ashburnham	1	D. Donovan	
Tufted Titmouse				
thr	Holliston	5	R. Hildreth	
Red-breasted Nuthatch				
27	Quabbin (G40)	15	T. Aversa	
Carolina Wren				
thr	Belmont	1 (since Nov '86)	J. Wissman	
7	Bridgewater, Rockport	1, 1	W. Petersen, E. Salmela	
8, 22	Westport, N. Middleboro	4, 2	G. Gove#, K. Holmes	
8-28	4 individuals reported from 4 locations.			
Winter Wren				
10, 13	Plymouth, Gloucester	1, 1	S. Dinsmore, T. Aversa	
Eastern Bluebird				
7, 19	Lakeville, E. Middleboro	1, 1	W. Petersen, K. Anderson	
25, 27	Sudbury, Quabbin (G40)	2m + 2f, 4	R. Forster, T. Aversa	
28, 29	Westboro, Milford	pr, 2	G. Gove#, R. Hildreth	
Varied Thrush				
2 from Jan.	Dedham	1	E. Cutler	
American Robin				
12	E. Middleboro	30	P. Anderson	
Gray Catbird				
14	Nantucket	1	BBC (J. Barton)	
Bohemian Waxwing				
21	N. Truro	7	D. Donovan, E. Salmela	
Cedar Waxwing				
13, 30	DFWS, DWWS	15-20, 41	D. Arvidson, D. Ludlow	
Northern Shrike				
4-18, 24	P.I., DWWS	1 or 2, 1	R. Humphrey, D. Ludlow	
14-21	5 individuals reported from 5 locations.			

#### WARBLERS THROUGH GROSBEAKS

The first migrant Yellow-rumped Warblers were noted on March 30 at Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. At least 7 Ipswich Sparrows were reported with 3 birds found at Allens Pond in South Dartmouth. Seventeen Fox Sparrows were seen during March with an influx near the end of the month. The **Harris' Sparrow** continued at a feeder on Nantucket.

Red-winged Blackbirds were on the move, and many reports of this species were received as birders watched for signs of spring. Other blackbirds migrating included Eastern Meadowlarks, Rusty Blackbirds, cowbirds and grackles.

Six Pine Grosbeaks were found at Quabbin near Shaft 12, and other winter finches noted included one report of White-winged Crossbill and Red Crossbills reported from six locations. Between 11 and 17 crossbills were seen most of the month at Salisbury State Reservation. Redpolls and siskins continued at feeders throughout the area, and the **Hoary Redpoll** continued at a feeder in Watertown. Evening Grosbeaks continued to be reported in good numbers from Worcester county. R.H.S.

Yellow-rumped Warbler				
13, 30	Gloucester, GMNWR	1, 4	T. Aversa, E. Salmela	
Pine Warbler				
25	Chatham	1	W. Bailey	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
Rufous-sided Towhee				
28	DWWS	1	R. Abrams	
American Tree Sparrow				
1-29	Nantucket	1-3	E. Andrews	
15	Bolton Flats	22	D. Donovan	
28, 29	Newbypt, ONWR	3, 4	BBC (S. Whittum), M. Lynch#	
Field Sparrow				
29	Waltham	1	L. Taylor	
Savannah Sparrow				
28	Salisbury	1	J. Cumming	
"Ipswich" Sparrow				
8	Chatham, S. Monomoy	1, 1	B. Nikula	
11, 18, 24	S. Dart. (Allens Pd)	3, 1, 1	LCES (R. Marshall)	
15, 29	P.I., N. Monomoy	1, 1	W. Petersen, B. Nikula	
Sharp-tailed Sparrow				
18	S. Dart. (Allens Pd)	1	LCES (R. Marshall)	
Seaside Sparrow				
25	Hyannisport	1	S. Clifton	
Fox Sparrow				
11, 25	Wakefield, Brookline	1, 1	M. Martinek, B. Hallett	
25	Sudbury, Concord	2, 5	R. Forster, R. Walton	
26, 28	Scituate, Hopkinton	2, 1	S. Smith, G. Gove#	
29	Hingham (World's End)	5	S. Smith	
Song Sparrow				
7, 27	Watertown, Ipswich	22, 20+	M. Hall, D. Rimmer	
29	Sudbury, Wayland	12, 12	G. Gove, J. Gordon	
Harris' Sparrow				
thr	Nantucket	1	R. Harnish#	
Dark-eyed Junco				
thr	Ipswich	18 max	J. Berry	
7	Salisbury	41	BBC (F. Bouchard)	
Lapland Longspur				
12, 20	P.I.	2, 1	S. Dinsmore	
14	Salisbury	3	T. Aversa	
Snow Bunting				
6	Nantucket	30-35	E. + C. Andrews	
7	P.I.	38	E. Salmela	
17	Middleboro	30+	D. Briggs	
24, 25, 30	Ipswich (Crane Res.)	11, 3, 4	D. Rimmer	
Red-winged Blackbird				
3, 4	Wayland, E. Middleboro	6, 50+	H. Parker, K. Anderson	
4, 5	Hopkinton, Dedham	5, 25	J. Gordon, M. MacLean	
7, 9	Middleboro, E. Boston	400, 300	W. Petersen, J. Cumming	
11	Halifax, Salisbury	1000+, 200+	K. Anderson, J. Berry	
15	Bridgewater-Lakeville	3250	BBC (D. Davis)	
Many other flocks of 10-50 birds reported in many areas.				
Eastern Meadowlark				
17, 18	Middleboro, P.I.	1, 6	D. Briggs, R. Humphrey	
19	Essex	1	J. MacDougall	
25	Newburyport	2	BBC (A. Blaisdell)	
26, 28	IRWS, Ipswich	1, 2	M. West, J. Berry	
30	DWWS	1	D. Ludlow	
Rusty Blackbird				
4, 6	E. Middleboro, DWWS	1, 4	K. Anderson, R. Stymeist#	
13, 28	W. Roxbury, Sudbury	15, 5	T. Aversa, R. Forster	
28, 30	Hyannisport, Wayland	2, 30	S. Clifton, E. Salmela	
Common Grackle				
4	Middleboro, Hudson	20, 15	K. Anderson, D. Donovan	
7	Rowley, Hopkinton	2, 14	J. Berry, J. Gordon	
8	Westport, E. Boston	100+, 2	D. Morimoto, J. Cumming	
29	Milford	84	R. Hildreth	
Other reports of 2-15 birds from many areas.				

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	MARCH 1987
Brown-headed 15	Cowbird Bridgewater-Lakeville	500	BBC (D. Davis)	
Pine Grosbeak 8	Quabbin	6	M. Lynch#	
Purple Finch 1-6, 1	Wayland, Middleboro	1, 1	T. Hart, D. Briggs	
7, 23	W. Newbury, E. Middleboro	3, 1	J. Berry#, K. Anderson	
Red Crossbill 1	Middleboro, P.I.	5, 8	D. Briggs, BBC (R. McHale)	
6-28	Salisbury	11-17	D. Chickering + v.o.	
12, 28	Plymouth, Topsfield	1, 26	S. Dinsmore, J. MacDougall	
30	Millis	2	B. Cassie	
White-winged 1	Crossbill P.I.	2	BBC (R. McHale)	
Common Redpoll thr	Watertown	60 max 3/10	R. Stymeist + v.o.	
thr	Nantucket	11 max	E. Andrews	
8, 10	Belmont, Arlington	5, 2	S. Sanders, L. Taylor	
14	Berlin	25	E. Salmela	
<b>Hoary Redpoll</b> thr	Watertown	1 ph	R. Stymeist + v.o.	
Pine Siskin thr	Millis	2-4+	M. Kasprzyk	
thr	Middleboro	1-3	D. Briggs	
thr	Nantucket	7-18	E. Andrews	
thr	Lakeville	2-3	H. La Pointe	
2, 29	Arlington	35, 4	L. Taylor	
Other reports of 1-15 birds at various times from many locations.				
Evening Grosbeak thr	Middleboro	8-10	D. Briggs	
8, 14	Hardwick, Ipswich	60+, 3	M. Lynch#, J. Berry	
15, 22	Berlin, Petersham	3, 40+	E. Salmela, M. Lynch#	

#### CORRIGENDUM TO DECEMBER 1986 FIELD RECORDS

On page 89 of the April 1987 issue of *Bird Observer*,

Pine Grosbeak  
10 E. Orleans; Quab. (G40) 3, 5; 6 A. Williams; M. Lynch#

should read

Pine Grosbeak  
10 P. I., E. Orleans 1 f, 20+ M. Schoene, E. Williams  
11 Quabbin (G40) 6 M. Lynch#

#### CORRIGENDUM TO 1986 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

On page 101 of the April 1987 issue of *Bird Observer*, the Nantucket CBC total should be 114 species, not 113 species. A White-Breasted Nuthatch was added after the compilation.

# FIELD RECORDS

## APRIL 1987



by George W. Gove and Lee E. Taylor

April 1987 was wet, cloudy, and cold with the average temperature being 45.1, 3.6 degrees below normal. The last freeze was on April 29, three weeks later than normal. Precipitation totalled 9.46 inches, the most for any April in 117 years of record keeping. This is 5.73 inches more than normal and the most for any month since March 1983 which had 9.72 inches. The most rain for a 24-hour period this month occurred on April 4-5 with 2.99 inches. Precipitation occurred on each day from April 16 to 25. Snow totaled 4.1 inches and came on April 28-29, late in the season, and made the seasonal total 42.5 inches. There was forty percent total sunshine, making for a gloomy month with twenty-one cloudy days and five partly cloudy days. Winds averaged 13.4 mph with gusts to 48 mph from the northeast on April 13. On twenty-three days wind direction had an easterly component, a new record and topping April 1986 with twenty-one days of easterly winds. Fog was frequent with heavy fog on six days.

### LOONS THROUGH WATERFOWL

Unusual in *BOEM* records are the reports from a pelagic trip covering a large area of Georges Bank and spanning the time period of April 21 to May 5. These reports are interspersed in the records and are mentioned in the appropriate places. The area covered, Georges Bank, extends from offshore Cape Cod to some 250 miles south, 360 miles east, and 380 miles ENE of Provincetown. Among the shearwaters and storm-petrels seen there, Northern Fulmar and Sooty Shearwater were noted as being abundant. With the exception of the fulmar, these birds were early according to dates noted on the MAS field card, but because it is difficult to obtain data on the occurrences of these pelagic species, information about them is continually being revised.

As was true last year compared to the two previous years, the reports of Snow Goose continued to be sparse. All of the regularly migrating waterfowl were reported. Three Harlequin Ducks continued at North Scituate and literally thousands of Oldsquaw were seen roosting off Nantucket and flying off in small flocks. Red-breasted Mergansers remained concentrated off Monomoy. G.W.G.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
Common Loon				
2, 12	Ipswich, P.I.	15, 11	D. Rimmer, BBC (J. Nove)	
11	Lakeville	3	W. Petersen	
Pied-billed Grebe				
6	IRWS	1	M. West	
11	Lakeville, S. Hanson	1, 1	W. Petersen	
Horned Grebe				
11	Lakeville	5	W. Petersen	
Red-necked Grebe				
3, 7	N. Scituate, Nant.	60, 6	D. Clapp, J. VanVorst	
26	N. Scituate	3	W. Petersen	
Northern Fulmar				
21-5/5	Georges Bank	130 max 4/25	S. Dinsmore	
Greater Shearwater				
21, 25	Georges Bank	1, 1	S. Dinsmore	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
Sooty Shearwater				
21-5/5	Georges Bank	26 max 4/23	S. Dinsmore	
Manx Shearwater				
26	Brown's Bank	1	S. Dinsmore	
Wilson's Storm-Petrel				
21-5/5	Georges Bank	226 total	S. Dinsmore	
Leach's Storm-Petrel				
23	Oceanographer Canyon	1	S. Dinsmore	
Northern Gannet				
3, 23	S. Monomoy, Mashpee	12, 2	R. Humphrey#, P. Trimble	
Great Cormorant				
3, 11	S. Monomoy, Newburyport	35, 4	R. Humphrey, BBC(G. Gove)	
22	Lynn	1	J. Quigley	
Double-crested Cormorant				
7, 9	Easton, DWWS	30, 42	K. Ryan, D. Ludlow	
11, 28	Lakeville, Middleboro	90, 30	K. Holmes	
29	Easton	75	K. Ryan	
American Bittern				
18, 20	DWWS	1, 1	D. Ludlow	
24, 25	Rowley, Squantum	1, 1	R. Forster, K. Ryan	
Great Blue Heron				
3, 11	Easton, Boxford (C.P.)	3, 3	K. Ryan, BBC (G. Gove)	
10, 15	Lynn, P.I.	12, 32	J. Quigley, R. Forster	
Great Egret				
2, 30	S. Dartmouth	1, 5	LCES (J. Lyons)	
12	S. Hanson	3	W. Petersen	
18	Ipswich	1	BBC (J. Berry)	
23, 24	Milton, Essex	2, 1	K. Anderson, R. Forster	
Snowy Egret				
2, 3	Marshfield, P.I.	2, 2	D. Clapp, T. Aversa	
6, 30	Saugus-Revere	3, 8	J. Berry	
12, 21	P.I., W. Yarmouth	2, 8	BBC (J. Nove), P. Trimble	
30	Chatham	23	W. Bailey	
Little Blue Heron				
4, 25	Marshfield	1 ad, 1	J. Hassett, D. Ludlow	
Cattle Egret				
24; 26, 30	Essex; Ipswich	1; 4, 8	R. Forster; J. Berry	
Green-backed Heron				
9, 19	W. Bridgewater, Milton	1, 1	S. Peak, S. Higginbotham	
24	Essex	1	R. Forster	
Black-crowned Night-Heron				
11, 15	S. Monomoy, Squantum	10, 2	R. Humphrey, K. Ryan	
19, 25	P.I.	2, 2	D. Chickering, BBC (W. VanCor)	
26, 30	Belmont, Mt. A.	5, 2	L. Taylor, BBC (S. Denison)	
Glossy Ibis				
2, 11	Dart., W. Bridgewater	2, 1	P. Trimble, W. Petersen	
12, 14-19	P.I., DWWS	4, 2	BBC (J. Nove), D. Clapp + v.o.	
18, 30	Essex, DWWS	7, 1	BBC (J. Berry), D. Ludlow	
Mute Swan				
thr	S. Dartmouth	2-5	LCES (J. Lyons)	
7, 11	S. Carver, S. Hanson	5, 5	J. Shaw, W. Petersen	
25	Mashpee	44	J. Aylward	
Snow Goose				
21	Medfield	5	R. Forster	
Brant				
11, 12, 25	Newburyport	110, 250, 200	v.o.	
Wood Duck				
5, 6	Halifax, IRWS	7, 17	K. Anderson#, M. West	
22	Newburyport	2	BBC (A. Blaisdell)	
Green-winged Teal				
2, 3-28	S. Dartmouth, Millis	62, 55 max 4/28	LCES (J. Lyons), M. Kasprzyk	
4-26	P.I.	36 max 4/4	D. Chickering	
11-26	W. Bridgewater	80 max 4/21	v.o.	
American Black Duck				
2, 9	S. Dartmouth	191, 136	LCES (J. Lyons)	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
Northern Pintail				
4, 11	P.I., S. Monomoy	2, 23	D. Chickering, R. Humphrey	
Blue-winged Teal				
3, 22	P.I., Newburyport	5, 28	T. Aversa, BBC (A. Blaisdell)	
19, 21	Halifax, W. Bridgewater	2m, 2	K. Anderson, K. Ryan	
Northern Shoveler				
2, 25	Halifax, P.I.	1, 4	W. Petersen, BBC (W. VanCor)	
Gadwall				
thr., 11	Salem, S. Monomoy	1-2 pr, 62	J. Berry, R. Humphrey	
12, 25	W. Harwich, P.I.	4, 4	J. Aylward, BBC (W. VanCor)	
American Wigeon				
11, 21	Cambridge (F.P.)	3, 18	BBC (J. Barton)	
12, 18	W. Harwich, W. Bridgewater	2, 6	J. Aylward, W. Petersen	
Redhead				
3; 18, 19	P.I.	1f; 1, 1	T. Aversa; D. Chickering	
12	Nantucket	3	E. Andrews	
Ring-necked Duck				
4, 6	Easton, IRWS	31, 22	K. Ryan, M. West	
9, 11	S. Hanson, W. Newbury	30, 22	W. Petersen, BBC (G. Gove)	
15	W. Carver	40	K. Anderson	
Greater Scaup				
12	Newburyport, Nantucket	500, 44	D. Chickering, E. Andrews	
Lesser Scaup				
12, 26	Nantucket, Falmouth	7, 225	E. Andrews, D. Arvidson#	
Harlequin Duck				
3, 11	N. Scituate	3, 3	D. Clapp, T. Aversa	
Oldsquaw				
3, 11	S. Monomoy, N. Monomoy	300, 400	R. Humphrey	
14	Nantucket	"thousands"	E. Andrews	
Black Scoter				
11, 12	S. Monomoy, P.I.	25, 5	R. Humphrey, BBC (J. Nove)	
23	Mashpee	3	P. Trimble	
Surf Scoter				
23	Mashpee	12	P. Trimble	
White-winged Scoter				
3	P.I., S. Monomoy	300, 200	T. Aversa, R. Humphrey	
Common Goldeneye				
3; 4, 12	Easton; Newburyport	24; 50, 50	K. Ryan; D. Chickering	
Barrow's Goldeneye				
8-9	Sagamore	1 m	S. Dinsmore	
Bufflehead				
thr	Salem	30 max 4/17	J. Berry	
6, 12	IRWS, Nantucket	53, 43	M. West, E. Andrews	
23	Mashpee	120	P. Trimble	
Hooded Merganser				
6	E. Middleboro	2 f	K. Anderson	
Common Merganser				
4, 6	Arlington, Lakeville	8, 10	L. Taylor, K. Anderson	
9, 11	Winchester, W. Newbury	3 m+7 f, 8	B. Porter, BBC(G. Gove)	
Red-breasted Merganser				
3, 11	S. Monomoy	1000, 2000	R. Humphrey	
21	N. Monomoy	500	R. Humphrey	
21, 23	W. Yarmouth, Mashpee	250, 110	P. Trimble	
Ruddy Duck				
3, 12	S. Monomoy, Lakeville	7, 4	R. Humphrey#, K. Holmes	

#### VULTURE THROUGH WOODPECKER

A second pair of Osprey has established a nest in the Lakeville area; there has been one conspicuous nest on Assawompssett Pond for several years. The Golden Eagle in the Bridgewater area continued from March. A Wild Turkey was reported from Sudbury. Details provided by the observer of a Gyrfalcon reported from Wellfleet are on file.

A Western Sandpiper was reported from North Monomoy, but no details were provided. There are no other April records for this species in *BOEM* records. A Stilt Sandpiper in breeding plumage was

noted at Plum Island making the seventh April record in fifteen years for this species. The Georges Bank survey referred to earlier included over 100 jaegers, one of which was a Long-tailed Jaeger. Excerpts from the observer's notes, made at the time of the sighting, are as follows:

The bird was smaller, paler, and much more buoyant than the other (Pomarine and Parasitic) jaegers. The flight was very similar to that of a tern with deep, rapid wingbeats and quick maneuvers. Back and upperwing surface light gray, slightly darker primaries with pale whitish bases. White at the base of the primaries much less extensive as compared to nearby Pomarine and Parasitic jaegers. Dark cap very obvious with much contrast between it and the lighter back. No yellow color discernible on the face. Underparts, including throat, chest, and belly, entirely white, lacking dark breastband. Tail and undertail coverts dark. Tail streamers very long, pointed and flutter as bird flies. Streamers look about twice the length of tail streamers on nearby Pomarine jaegers. Proportionately, the bird appeared slimmer and had longer, narrower wings than the other jaegers. The underwing and the bill were not seen well.

Unfortunately, no details were submitted with the two skua species reports. One of the skuas was said to be a South Polar Skua and the other a probable Great Skua. Also included in the pelagic report were all the eastern alcids, including Common Murre and 45 Atlantic Puffins. In addition, on the morning of April 22, there was a landbird fallout that included a Downy Woodpecker and a Northern Flicker. Other species included in the fallout are listed later in the records.

G.W.G.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
Turkey Vulture				
2, 4	W. Boylston, Easton	1, 4	A. Strauss, K. Ryan	
11, 20	Quabbin (G40)	11, 10	M. Lynch, A. Kasprzyk#	
5-30	Reports of 1-3 individuals from 12 locations.			
Osprey				
2-21	S. Dartmouth	1-3	LCES (J. Lyons)	
6, 18	Lakeville	1 pr, 2 pr	fide K. Anderson	
11, 26; 30	Mt. Wachusett, Wellfleet	11, 6; 4	EMHW	
29, 30	P.I.	9, 5	EMHW	
10-30	Reports of 1 or 2 birds from 10 locations.			
Bald Eagle				
20	Quabbin (G40)	3 imm	A.+ M. Kasprzyk	
Northern Harrier				
2, 9, 21	S. Dartmouth	1, 2, 3	LCES (J. Lyons)	
4, 25	Salisbury, DWWS	3, 6	D. Chickering, D. Ludlow	
29	P.I.	10	EMHW	
30	P.I.	2 f + 1 imm m	M. Kasprzyk	
30	Wellfleet	5	EMHW	
Sharp-shinned Hawk				
2	Lancaster, Milton (F.M.)	1, 1	A. Strauss, P. Larvey	
16-24, 26	Nantucket, Saugus	1 f, 3	E. Andrews, BBC (C. Jackson)	
29, 30	P.I.	5, 11	EMHW	
30	Wellfleet	14	EMHW	
Cooper's Hawk				
18, 26	Middleboro, Bridgewater	1, 1	K. Holmes, W. Petersen	
30	Wellfleet	2	EMHW	
Northern Goshawk				
2, 6	Cambridge, IRWS	1 imm, 1	P. McCarthy, M. West	
11-25	Boxford (C.P.)	pr at nest	v.o.	
26, 29	DWWS, Easton	1, pr	D. Ludlow, K. Ryan	
Red-shouldered Hawk				
thr	E. Middleboro	pr at nest	K. Anderson	
2, 11	Lancaster, Boxford (C.P.)	1, 1 or 2	A. Strauss, v.o.	
19	Quabbin (G40)	1	G. Gove#	
Broad-winged Hawk				
11; 29,30	Dartmouth; Easton	1; 3, 10	P. Trimble; K. Ryan	
25, 26	Mt. Wachusett	30, 44	EMHW	
30	Wellfleet	24, 8	EMHW	
19-27	Reports of individuals from 5 locations.			

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
<b>Red-tailed Hawk</b>				
8, 28	Foxboro, Norton	3, pr at nest	K. Anderson, K. Ryan	
1-29	Reports of individuals from 5 locations.			
<b>Rough-legged Hawk</b>				
3, 6	W. Bridgewater, Otis AFB	1, 1 dk	K. Ryan, P. Trimble	
26	Middleboro	1 lt + 1 dk	W. Petersen	
30	DWWS	2 dk	D. Ludlow	
6-29	Reports of individuals from 6 locations.			
<b>Golden Eagle</b>				
9, 17	W. Bridgewater	1 ad	S. Peak	
<b>American Kestrel</b>				
thr	N. Beverly	pr	J. Berry	
11, 25	Boxford-Newbypt, DWWS	5, 19	BBC (G. Gove), D. Ludlow	
29, 30	P.I.	34, 82	EMHW	
30	Wellfleet	62	EMHW	
<b>Merlin</b>				
22	Newburyport	1	BBC (A. Blaisdell)	
25	Newburyport	1	BBC (W. VanCor)	
26, 30	N. Scituate, PRNWR	1, 1	W. Petersen, M. Kasprzyk	
29, 30	P.I.	2, 7	EMHW	
30	P'town, Wellfleet	1, 3	B. Nikula, EMHW	
<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>				
12, 25	Mt. Wachusett, P.I.	1, 1	G. Gove#, P. Trimble	
15; 30	Mt. Wachusett; P.I.	1; 1, 1	EMHW	
<b>Gyrfalcon (details submitted)</b>				
12	Wellfleet	1 (dark)	S. Dinsmore	
<b>Ruffed Grouse</b>				
7, 11	Easton, Boxford (C.P.)	2, 1 drumming	K. Ryan, BBC (G. Gove)	
12, 18	E. Middleboro, Ipswich	1 drumming, 2	K. Anderson, BBC (J. Berry)	
19	Petersham	5	G. Gove#	
<b>Wild Turkey</b>				
8, 28	Lancaster, Sudbury	6, 1	A. Strauss, C. Haigh	
<b>Northern Bobwhite</b>				
19, 26	E. Middleboro, Belmont	2, 5	K. Anderson, L. Taylor	
<b>Virginia Rail</b>				
11, 22	Waltham, Newburyport	1 (call), 1	L. Taylor, BBC(A. Blaisdell)	
<b>Sora</b>				
18-22	Nantucket	1	fide E. Andrews	
<b>American Coot</b>				
4	E. Sandwich	7	B. Porter	
<b>Common Moorhen</b>				
19	P.I.	1	D. Chickering	
<b>Black-bellied Plover</b>				
14, 26	N. Monomoy	404, 500	R. Humphrey, B. Nikula	
<b>Lesser Golden-Plover</b>				
14	N. Monomoy	1	R. Humphrey	
<b>Semipalmated Plover</b>				
29	S. Dartmouth	1	LCES (J. Lyons)	
<b>Piping Plover</b>				
thr	Ipswich	8 max 4/14	D. Rimmer	
2	Nantucket	2	E. Andrews	
2, 29	S. Dartmouth	5, 11	LCES (J. Lyons)	
3, 8-30	N. Monomoy, N. Monomoy	2, 14 max 4/14	R. Humphrey	
8, 11	Chatham, P.I.	5, 3	R. Humphrey, BBC (G. Gove)	
18, 23	Hyannis, Mashpee	2, 2	P. Trimble	
<b>Killdeer</b>				
12	P.I.	3	BBC (J. Nove)	
<b>American Oystercatcher</b>				
3-30	N. Monomoy	16 max 4/26	R. Humphrey	
3	Chatham	4	B. Nikula	
11, 23	S. Monomoy, Mashpee	6, 1	R. Humphrey, P. Trimble	
<b>Greater Yellowlegs</b>				
1-21	W. Bridgewater	12 max 4/21	W. Petersen	
2	Concord	2	R. Walton	
24	Newbypt, Yarmouthport	22, 24	R. Forster, J. Aylward	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
Greater Yellowlegs (continued)				
thr	Reports of 1-4 individuals from 9 locations.			
Lesser Yellowlegs				
10, 12	DWWS, Marshfield	1, 1	D. Ludlow#, W. Petersen#	
19; 21, 26	P.I., W. Bridgewater	1; 1, 1	D. Chickering; W. Petersen	
Willet				
11	P.I.	1	BBC (G. Gove)	
30	S. Dartmouth	2	LCES (J. Lyons)	
30	N. Monomoy	2	R. Humphrey	
Upland Sandpiper				
7, 11	Nantucket, Still River	1, 1	D. Beattie#, C. Quinlan	
19, 21-28	Otis AFB, Lincoln	2, 1	P. Trimble, J. Carter	
24, 26	Middleboro, Halifax	1, 2	K. Holmes, W. Petersen	
Red Knot				
14	N. Monomoy	2	R. Humphrey	
Sanderling				
thr	Ipswich	33 max 4/27	D. Rimmer	
2	Nantucket	235	E.+C. Andrews	
23, 26	Mashpee, N. Monomoy	102, 450	P. Trimble, B. Nikula	
Western Sandpiper (no details)				
9	N. Monomoy	1	R. Humphrey	
Least Sandpiper				
14	N. Monomoy	3	R. Humphrey	
Pectoral Sandpiper				
2, 12	Concord, P.I.	1, 1	R. Walton, BBC (J. Nove)	
12, 24	Marshfield, Rowley	4, 2	W. Petersen#, R. Forster	
Purple Sandpiper				
21, 26	Mashpee, N. Scituate	22, 300	P. Trimble, W. Petersen	
Dunlin				
3, 21	S. Dartmouth	52, 29	LCES (J. Lyons)	
26	N. Monomoy	700	B. Nikula	
Stilt Sandpiper				
9-12	P.I.	1 br pl	S. Dinsmore + v.o.	
Short-billed Dowitcher				
2, 29	S. Dartmouth	5, 1	LCES (J. Lyons)	
14, 26	N. Monomoy	7, 2	R. Humphrey, B. Nikula	
Common Snipe				
thr	DWWS	36 max 4/22	D. Ludlow + v.o.	
1	W. Bridgewater	70	W. Petersen	
3-9	Millis	63 max 4/3	M. Kasprzyk	
18	Ipswich	150	J. Berry	
American Woodcock				
11, 14	Ipswich, IRWS	1, 5	J. Berry, BBC (A. Blaisdell)	
12, 23	Belmont, E. Middleboro	2, 1	BBC (S. Sanders), K. Anderson	
Wilson's Phalarope				
30	Newburyport	1 f	M. Kasprzyk	
Red Phalarope				
23, 24	Georges Bank, Corsair Canyon		40, 15	S. Dinsmore
Pomarine Jaeger				
23-28	Georges Bank	26 max 4/23, 83 total	S. Dinsmore	
Parasitic Jaeger				
23, 25, 26	Georges Bank	3 ad, 1 ad, 1 ad	S. Dinsmore	
Long-tailed Jaeger (details submitted)				
23	Oceanographer Canyon	1 ad	S. Dinsmore	
jaeger species				
23-28	Georges Bank	33	S. Dinsmore	
skua species (no details)				
23, 24	Georges Bank	1, 1	S. Dinsmore	
Laughing Gull				
2, 18	Chatham, Hyannis	12, 1	R. Humphrey, P. Trimble	
Little Gull				
9	Newburyport	2 ad	S. Dinsmore	
Ring-billed Gull				
2, 3	S. Dartmouth, E. Middleboro	89, 500	LCES (J. Lyons), K. Anderson	
30	Lynn	120	J. Quigley	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
Iceland Gull				
9, 24	Newburyport, P.I.	11, 1	S. Dinsmore, R. Forster	
25	DWWS	1	D. Ludlow	
Glaucous Gull				
21, 25	P'town, Chatham	1 (1W), 1	H. Wilson, B. Nikula	
Dovekie				
24, 25	Georges Bank	1, 2	S. Dinsmore	
26	Gt. So. Channel	7	S. Dinsmore	
Common Murre				
26	Brown's Bank	3 br pl	S. Dinsmore	
Thick-billed Murre				
26	Brown's Bank	5 br pl	S. Dinsmore	
Razorbill				
23, 25, 26	Georges Bank	1, 2, 1	S. Dinsmore	
Black Guillemot				
3	N. Scituate	1 br pl	D. Clapp	
Atlantic Puffin				
23-5/5	Georges Bank	11 max 4/26, 45 total	S. Dinsmore	
Eastern Screech-Owl				
thr	Easton	1 red	K. Ryan	
Great Horned Owl				
11	Bridgewater (from Feb.)	nest + 1 yg	W. Petersen	
14-23, 15	Ipswich, E. Middleboro	1, 1	J. Berry, K. Anderson	
21, 22	Mt. A., W. Bridgewater	1, 1	BBC (K. Griffis), S. Peak	
Snowy Owl				
3	E. Boston, S. Monomoy	6, 1	N. Smith, R. Humphrey	
4, 11	Newburyport, P.I.	1, 1	D. Chickering, S. Dinsmore	
16, 21	Salisbury, N. Monomoy	1, 1	S. Dinsmore, R. Humphrey	
26, 30	N. Monomoy	1, 1	R. Humphrey	
27	Lincoln	1	J. Carter	
Barred Owl				
11	Lakeville, Petersham	2, 1	W. Petersen, M. Lynch	
Long-eared Owl				
9	Clinton	1	E. Salmela#	
Short-eared Owl				
6, 11	E. Middleboro, S. Monomoy	1, 2 (nest)	K. Anderson, R. Humphrey	
Chimney Swift				
25	Milford	1	R. Hildreth	
Belted Kingfisher				
11	Lakeville, S. Hanson	1, 1	W. Petersen	
12, 21	S. Carver, W. Yarmouth	1, 2	K. Anderson, P. Trimble	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				
15-30	Mt. A.	1-2	v.o.	
12, 18	Newbury, Falmouth	1, 1	D. Chickering, P. Trimble	
Downy Woodpecker				
22	Georges Bank	1	S. Dinsmore	
Northern Flicker				
12, 18	P.I., Hamilton/Ipswich	17, 19	BBC (J. Nove), BBC (J. Berry)	
22	Georges Bank	3	S. Dinsmore	
Pileated Woodpecker				
1, 4	Lincoln, Winchester	1, 1	D. Curtiss, R. Clayton	
10, 29; 11	Waltham; Essex	1; 1	fide R. Forster	
11-18	Petersham	1-2	M. Lynch	

#### FLYCATCHERS THROUGH GROSBEAKS

April, especially the last few days of the month, can host a major spring migration if weather conditions are right; with this year's rain statistics, it was decidedly not such an April! Some of our wintering species, most notably American Tree Sparrow for which there were no April reports for the first time in ten years, trickled out to the north early. Migrants from the south were few in number of individuals and generally arrived late. This trend is best exemplified by the swallows, particularly Rough-winged and Bank for which April totals were the lowest since *Bird Observer* began publication. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were also reported in very low numbers. A final indication of the weak

migration was the total warbler species count of seven, lowest in the last fourteen years (but only one less than in 1986) and notable compared to the average of about eighteen warbler species recorded in past Aprils.

In the noteworthy event department, a Carolina Wren at Mount Auburn on April 27 is thought to be the first record from that site. Counts of forty or more Pine Warblers at Plymouth and West Yarmouth at first glance might seem remarkable, but these numbers are consistent with reports in recent years of fifties of individuals from Wareham, another southeastern Massachusetts breeding location for the species. "Southern" warbler reports consisted of a single Prothonotary on Nantucket on the fifth. Also on Nantucket, the Harris' Sparrow initially discovered in November remained until April 22. Winter finch reports were generally light, including ten Red Crossbills and two Common Redpolls plus small flocks of Pine Siskins widely distributed through the region. Fledged young Pine Siskins were noted in Newton at the end of the month. European Goldfinches, origins unknown, were reported from three different localities. Finally, an interesting "fallout" of land birds onto a ship at George's Bank occurred on April 22 in the early morning. Included were:

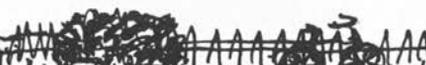
1 Downy Woodpecker	1 Pine Warbler	2 Song Sparrows
3 Northern Flickers	1 Palm Warbler	1 White-throated Sparrow
1 Winter Wren	1 European Starling	1 Red-winged Blackbird
2 Ruby-crowned Kinglets	1 Savannah Sparrow	1 Pine Siskin.

This made a pretty good total species count on that day for a pelagic trip! L.E.T.

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
Eastern Phoebe				
11	Quabbin (G40), Boxford	10, 11	M. Lynch#, J. Berry	
12, 19	Ipswich, Lincoln	6, 10	J. Berry, BBC (J. Nove)	
Horned Lark				
23, 26	Mashpee, Otis AFB	6, 16	P. Trimble	
Purple Martin				
12, 15	Wellfleet, Nantucket	1, 1	S. Dinsmore, E. Andrews	
19, 24	W. Newbury, Middleboro	3 m, 4	D. Briggs, K. Holmes	
26	S. Hanson	2	W. Petersen	
Tree Swallow				
3, 7	E. Middleboro, Lakeville	1, 13	K. Anderson, R. Turner	
11, 15	P. I., Nantucket	30, 4	BBC (G. Gove), E. Andrews#	
Northern Rough-winged Swallow				
9, 14	Manomet, DWWS	1, 1	MBO staff, D. Clapp	
Bank Swallow				
30	DWWS	1	D. Clapp	
Cliff Swallow				
30	DWWS	1	D. Clapp	
Barn Swallow				
11, 14	Cedarville, Nantucket	1, 11	S. Dinsmore, E. Andrews#	
30	DWWS	18	D. Clapp	
Fish Crow				
thr, 4	Hanson, Winchester	2-4, 1	W. Petersen, R. Clayton#	
8, 11	Concord, E. Middleboro	34, 4	S. Perkins, K. Anderson	
12, 21-30	Manomet, Mt. A.	1, 4 max	J. Atwood, v. o.	
25	IRWS	2	D. Chickering	
Red-breasted Nuthatch				
11	Boxford, Quabbin (G40)	2, 15	J. Berry, M. Lynch	
12, 21	Ipswich, W. Yarmouth	5, 8	J. Berry, P. Trimble	
Brown Creeper				
11, 12	Boxford, P. I.	3, 3	v. o., D. Chickering	
17, 18	Petersham, Ashumet	14, 6	M. Lynch, P. Trimble	
23, 28	Nantucket	1, 1	E. Andrews#	
Carolina Wren				
11, 15	Lakeville, Plymouth	2, 4	W. Petersen, S. Dinsmore	
27, 30	Mt. A., Easton	1, 1	BBC (R. Stymeist), K. Ryan	
Winter Wren				
11, 20	Quabbin (G40)	1, 1	M. Lynch, M. Kasprzyk	
18	Braintree, Milton	1, 1	BBC (G. d'Entremont)	
Golden-crowned Kinglet				
8, 11	Lancaster, Boxford	12, 1-2	A. Strauss, J. Berry	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
Golden-crowned Kinglet (continued)				
22	Newburyport	13	BBC (A. Blaisdell)	
27	Mt. A.	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)	
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				
11	Quabbin (G40)	7	M. Lynch	
26, 30	MNWS, Provincetown	17, 30	S. Pilcher, B. Nikula	
12-27	Reports of 22 individuals from 8 locations.			
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher				
24, 25-27	Ipswich, Rehoboth	1, 1	R. Forster, K. Anderson	
Eastern Bluebird				
3, 8-29	Lincoln, Bolton	1 m, 2	R. DeNormandie, J. Wasmer	
11-22, 12	E. Middleboro, Lynn	2 m, 2	K Anderson#, J Quigley#	
19, 22	Quabbin (G40), Plympton	8 m + 3 f, 1 pr	G. Gove#, R. Turner	
Hermit Thrush				
8, 18	Manomet, Falmouth	1b., 8	MBO staff, P. Trimble	
18, 22	Petersham, P. I.	15, 12	M. Lynch, R. Humphrey	
24, 30	Marshfield, Mt. A.	4, 5	D. Clapp, BBC (S. Denison)	
Brown Thrasher				
11, 26	S. Monomoy, Holliston	1, 1	R. Humphrey, R. Hildreth	
Cedar Waxwing				
1, 9	Wayland, Lincoln	45, 20	R. Forster	
17, 21	Ipswich, E. Middleboro	63, 10	J. Berry, K. Anderson	
Solitary Vireo				
20, 23	Quabbin (G40), Middleboro	2, 1	M. Kasprzyk, D. Briggs	
Yellow-rumped Warbler				
11, 18	Lakeville, Falmouth	6, 35	W. Petersen, P. Trimble	
19, 20	Middleboro, Quabbin(G40)	4, 5+	K. Holmes, M. Kasprzyk	
Pine Warbler				
5, 15	Norfolk, Plymouth	1, 62	A. Addison, S. Dinsmore	
11-20	Quabbin (G40)	13 max 4/20	v. o.	
21	W. Yarmouth	40	P. Trimble	
Reports of a total of 20 individuals from 11 locations.				
Palm Warbler				
12, 12-30	Rockport, Mt. A.	3, 12 max 4/18	S. Pilcher, v. o.	
22, 26	Newburyport, MNWS	20, 14	BBC (A. Blaisdell), S. Pilcher	
Black-and-white Warbler				
20	P. I.	1	S. Whittum#	
Prothonotary Warbler				
5	Nantucket	1 m	E. Andrews#	
Louisiana Waterthrush				
11-26, 17	Boxford, Barre	4 max 4/25, 2	v. o., M. Lynch	
17, 22	Petersham, Manomet	3, 1 b	M. Lynch, J. Atwood	
Common Yellowthroat				
24	Nantucket	1 f	E. Andrews	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				
17	Hull	1	K. Gelzins	
Blue Grosbeak				
20, 24	Nantucket	2, 1 f	D. Beattie, B. Vigneau	
25-26	P. I.	1	v. o.	
26-29	Nantucket	1 m	E. Andrews	
Indigo Bunting				
5-14, 21	Nantucket, Southboro	1 m, 1 m	E. Andrews#, D. Greenberg	
22, 24	Middleboro, Mt. A.	1 m, 1	D. Briggs#, BBC (F. Bouchard)	
Rufous-sided Towhee				
18, 24	Essex, Hanson	1, 1	J. Berry, W. Petersen	
27	Milton (F. M.)	2	R. Vernon	
Chipping Sparrow				
10, 12	Cedarville, Middleboro	1, 1	S. Dinsmore, D. Briggs	
21, 30	Easton, Mt. A.	3, 4	K. Ryan, BBC (S. Denison)	
Field Sparrow				
18, 26	Falmouth, Saugus	6, 1	P. Trimble, BBC (C. Jackson)	
Vesper Sparrow				
30	Otis AFB	1	P. Trimble	
Savannah Sparrow				
11, 21	W. Bridgewater	7, 8	W. Petersen, K. Ryan	

DATE	LOCATION	NUMBER	OBSERVERS	APRIL 1987
Sharp-tailed Sparrow				
21	S. Dartmouth	1	LCES (J. Lyons)	
Fox Sparrow				
11	Cambridge (F. P.), P. I.	1, 2	BBC (J. Barton, G. Gove)	
Song Sparrow				
11, 12	Quabbin (G40), P. I.	22, 60	M. Lynch, BBC (J. Nove)	
Swamp Sparrow				
11	Raynham, W. Newbury	1, 2	W. Petersen, BBC (G. Gove)	
Harris' Sparrow				
from Nov 1986	Nantucket	1 ad	R. Harnish#	
Lapland Longspur				
8, 14	Sagamore, Wellfleet	1, 1	S. Dinsmore	
Snow Bunting				
14	Wellfleet	1	S. Dinsmore	
Bobolink				
30	DWWS	1 m	D. Clapp	
Eastern Meadowlark				
18, 26	Ipswich, Otis AFB	16, 8	BBC (J. Berry), P. Trimble	
Rusty Blackbird				
4, 6	N. Middleboro, IRWS	2, 7	K. Holmes, M. West	
Purple Finch				
12, 19	Ipswich, P. I.	6 m, 7	J. Berry, D. Chickering	
20, 23-30	Quab. (G40), Nant.	10+, 11 max	M. Kasprzyk#, E. Andrews#	
Red Crossbill				
27	Mt. A., Newbury	2, 8	R. Stymeist#, R. McHale	
Common Redpoll				
14	Brookline	2	B. Reilly	
Pine Siskin				
17	Petersham	25	M. Lynch	
29	W. Newton	ad feeding yg	M. Sears	
Reports of 1-7 individuals from 10 locations.				
European Goldfinch				
3, 13-14	Truro, Framingham	1, 1	fide R. Prescott, R. Smith	
21	Bellingham	1	V. Coates	
Evening Grosbeak				
thr, 1	Middleboro, Easton	30, 4	D. Briggs, K. Ryan	
19	Ipswich, Quabbin (G40)	15, 25	J. Berry, J. Gordon#	
23, 30	Lincoln, Nantucket	30, 6	R. Forster, E. Andrews	


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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ad	adult	F.P.	Fresh Pond, Cambridge
b	banded	G40	Gate 40, Quabbin
br	breeding	H.P.	Halibut Point, Rockport
dk	dark (phase)	I.	Island
f	female	M.V.	Martha's Vineyard
imm	immature	Mt.A.	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge
ind	individuals	Nant.	Nantucket
juv	juvenile	Newbypt	Newburyport
loc	location	P.I.	Plum Island
lt	light (phase)	Pd	Pond
m	male	P'town	Provincetown
max	maximum	Quab.	Quabbin
migr	migrating	Res.	Reservation
n	nesting	R.P.	Race Point, Provincetown
ph	photographed	S. Dart.	South Dartmouth
pl	plumage	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
pr	pair	Stellw.	Stellwagen (Bank)
S	summer (1S = first summer)	BBC	Brookline Bird Club
thr	throughout	BOEM	Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts
v.o.	various observers	CBC	Christmas Bird Count
W	winter (2W = second winter)	CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club
w/	with	DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary
yg	young	DWWS	Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary
#	additional observers	EMHW	Eastern Massachusetts Hawk Watch
A.A.	Arnold Arboretum	FCBC	Felix Cutler Bird Club
A.P.	Andrews Point, Rockport	GMNWR	Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
B.I.	Belle Isle, E. Boston	IRWS	Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary
B.R.	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	LCES	Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies
Buzz.	Buzzards Bay	MAS	Massachusetts Audubon Society
C.	cape as in Cape Cod	MBO	Manomet Bird Observatory
Cambr.	Cambridge	MNWS	Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis	NEHW	New England Hawk Watch
C.P.	Crooked Pond, Boxford	ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
E.P.	Eastern Point, Gloucester	PRNWR	Parker River National Wildlife Refuge
F.E.	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
F.H.	Fort Hill, Eastham	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
F.M.	Fowl Meadow	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary

## ABOUT THE COVER: JOHN SILL'S CHIMNEY SWIFT

The **Stephen Greene Press** of Lexington, Massachusetts, who publishes yearly *THE BIRD IDENTIFICATION CALENDAR*, generously gave us permission to reproduce on our August cover this beautiful painting from the calendar by **John Sill**.

The artist is a native of North Carolina and a graduate in wildlife biology of North Carolina State University. His training in watercolor came from his father, Charles Sill, a well-known artist and teacher in the South. John paints exclusively in transparent watercolor, and his work has won a number of awards in shows of wildlife art. His concern for biological accuracy matches his desire to paint birds to reveal their individual personalities. John has been the artist for *The Bird Identification Calendars* since their beginning. He and his wife Cathy live in Franklin, North Carolina, where his work is displayed in the family gallery.

A famous "Swallow tree" is described in *Wilson's American Ornithology*. From early May through September, large numbers of swifts would emerge at dawn from a hole sixty feet above the ground and return at sundown to descend in a stream through the same opening. When this elm was struck violently with an axe, the birds "would rush out in millions, and with a great noise."

The falcon-shaped bow-and-arrow forms of these tiny diurnal migrants first appear in the skies over our state in late April and remain with us until early October, when they leave to winter as far south as the Amazon basin. The Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*) is a true inhabitant of the ocean of air (hence the *pelagica* of its Latin name), possibly even mating in flight. This bird flies open-mouthed on rigid wings, alternately sailing or flickering bat-like with a noisy chattering accompaniment, in a manner suited to funneling diverse insects into the open gape. (That swifts do not beat their wings alternately in flight has been proved by slow-motion filming.)

This species nests primarily in chimneys, in large groups or single pairs depending on the space. The bracket nests of fine twigs (snapped off by the feet of the flying swift) are attached to the wall of the nest cavity by the birds' glutinous saliva. The young occasionally spill out of the nest to the hearth below, where they will perish unless returned aloft. To save them, a piece of terry cloth to which they will cling can be suspended within the chimney ten feet down from the top. The chimney (or other hollow structure) is also the site of the evening roost. Audubon reported nine thousand birds, chiefly males, in one tree. The birder who has not witnessed the evening return of Chimney Swifts, when they wheel in a large circle over the roost and plummet spectacularly, wings raised in the dive, tail fanned at the last instant, at an unbelievable rate (ten thousand in 37 minutes), has one of the most exciting prospects in birdwatching still awaiting.

Dorothy R. Arvidson

In the **At a Glance** photo for June, we see what appears to be a rather small, plump, short-tailed sparrow or finch of some kind. The presence of prominent ventral streaks, extending well down onto the flanks, readily eliminates all of the plain-breasted sparrows. Likewise, the short tail considerably reduces the sparrow options, with only the Savannah Sparrow being a viable candidate. A close examination, however, should lead the viewer away from the Savannah Sparrow as a possibility. The pictured bird clearly shows a single bold wing bar and at least the suggestion of a second and lesser bar above it. These features, along with what appears to be an especially fine-pointed bill and relatively short tarsi, should remove the Savannah Sparrow from further consideration.

At this point, we must conclude that the bird is most likely one of two small striped "winter finches" -- either a Pine Siskin or a Common Redpoll. The Hoary Redpoll typically lacks heavy streaking on the flanks and undertail coverts. Further scrutiny of the folded left wing reveals a pale marking or slash below the lower wing bar. Could this be the partially concealed yellow wing stripe of a Pine Siskin? A look at the head gives us the answer. The chin, which is readily observed in the photograph, is clearly light, not black, and the crown appears to have fine streaks on it, rather than being uniformly colored the way it is in a redpoll. Thus by considering the combination of streaked underparts, short tail, light throat, streaked crown, at least one prominent wing bar, and the trace of a hidden wing stripe, we can only deduce that the bird pictured is a Pine Siskin (*Carduelis pinus*).

The fine black-and-white photo of a Pine Siskin was taken by Robert Marshall at the Lloyd Center for Environmental Studies on January 5, 1987.

Wayne R. Petersen



*Pine Siskin*

*Photo by Robert Marshall*

## AT A GLANCE

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Photo by Wayne R. Petersen



Can you identify this bird? (*right*)

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



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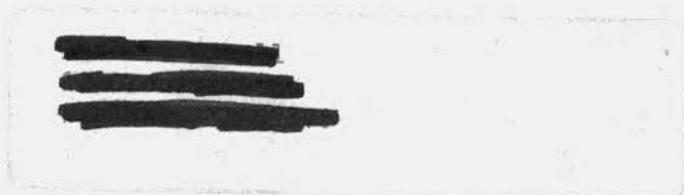
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