BIRD OBSERVER

OF EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

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Articles, field notes, and photographs are welcome, though publication is not guaranteed.

Advertising space is available on the following schedule: full page, $40.00; half page, $20.00; quarter page, $10.00. Subscribers only may advertise one-of-a-kind birding items free of charge on a space available basis. Such announcements must be limited to 25 words. All advertising copy is subject to approval by the staff.

REGIONAL COMPILERS

Please send all of your reports before the 5th of the following month to any of the compilers in your area:

Regional Statistical Editor:	Mrs. Ruth P. Emery, 225 Belmont Street, Wollaston 02170
Barnstable County:	Mr. Blair Nikula, Park Street, Harwich 02645
Bristol County:	Mrs. Phyllis Regan, 132R Horseneck Road, S. Dartmouth 02714
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Norfolk County:	Mr. David T. Brown, 35 Bridge Street, Quincy 02169
Suffolk County:	Mr. Stephen P. Grinley, 1189 Commonwealth Avenue, Allston 02134

EDITOR'S PAGE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Leverich,

I'm dropping you this note in response to an article I read of yours in the January-February Bird Observer, on sibling species. In footnote no. 5 you mentioned that possibly Western Sandpipers might linger on the Newburyport flats longer than Semis. I have spent a good deal of time observing the feeding habits of the shorebirds in Newburyport, particularly the Semis and Westerns, in conjunction with work I was doing here at the Observatory. For some reason, most of the time the shorebirds pull out of the harbor well before the mud is covered - possibly having 15 minutes of feeding time left. It's as if they anticipate the tide shortly covering the mud. I haven't observed Westerns remaining behind when the Semis leave.

Sincerely,
Paul K. Donahue
Manomet Bird Observatory

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING WILDERNESS STUDY

We have received notice that a Public Hearing will be held at the Y.M.C.A., Newburyport, Massachusetts, on April 25, 1974, beginning at 9:30 a.m., concerning a study of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge's suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

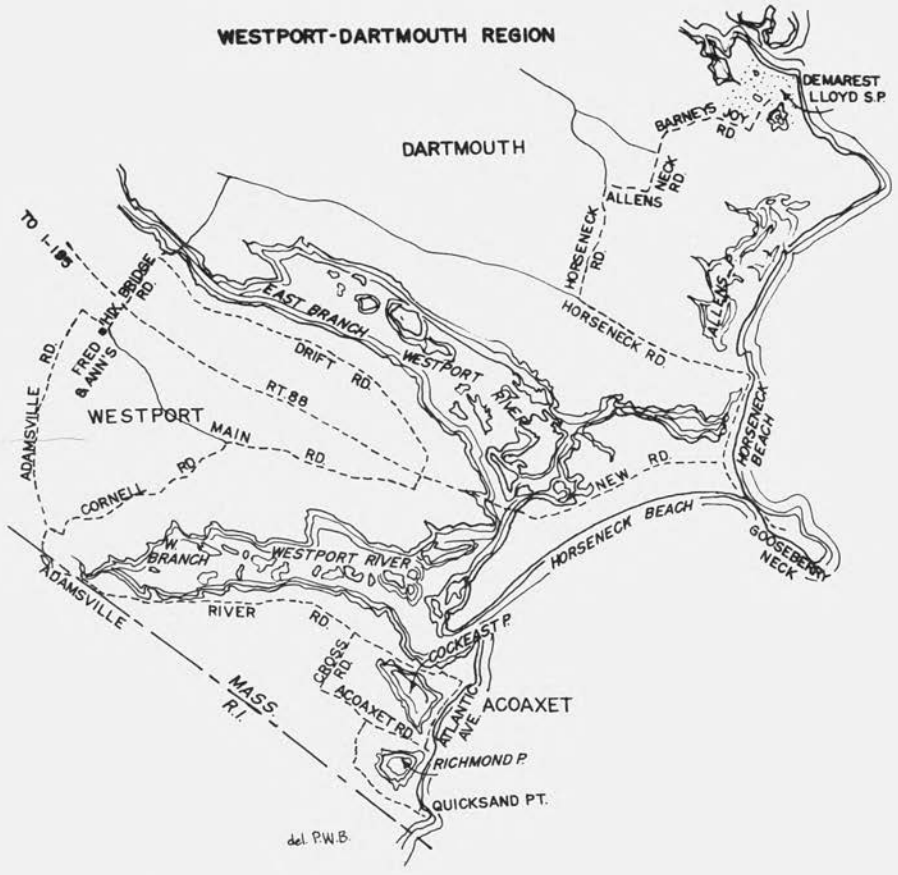
Individuals or organizations may express their oral or written views by appearing at this hearing, or they may submit written comments for inclusion in the official record of the hearing to the Regional Director, Sport, Fisheries & Wildlife Bureau, J.W. McCormack Post Office & Court House, Boston, Massachusetts 02109, by May 25, 1974.

JOHNNY HORIZON CLEANUP DAY

Sunday, April 29, 1974, is "cleanup" day at Plum Island. This is a national program sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Interior to promote environmental awareness and action. Why not spend a few hours to help and keep Plum Island a place of beauty? Please contact Mr. Herman D'Entremont (969-8146) for further information or meet at Refuge Parking Lot #1 at 9:00 A.M.

BROOKLINE BIRD CLUB

The Spring Lecture Meeting of the Brookline Bird Club will be held at the Cahnes Theater of the Boston Museum of Science on Friday, April 26, 1974, at 7:30 P.M. The program will be "A Symphony of Life" by Jack Swedberg, Senior Wildlife Photographer for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Game. This film will highlight the flora and fauna of Massachusetts, with an interesting segment on Bald and Golden Eagles at Quabbin Reservoir.


WESTPORT-DARTMOUTH REGION
DARTMOUTH
DEMAREST LLOYD S.P.
BARNEYS JOY RD
ALLENS NECK RD
HORSENECK RD
ALLENS P.
HORSENECK RD.
TO I-195
HIX BRIDGE RD.
FRED & ANN'S
EAST BRANCH
WESTPORT RIVER
DRIFT RD.
ADAMSVILLE RD.
WESTPORT
RT. 88
MAIN RD.
CORNELL RD.
HORSENECK BEACH
NEW RD.
GOOSEBERRY NECK
W. BRANCH
WESTPORT RIVER
HORSENECK BEACH
ADAMSVILLE
RIVER RD.
COCKEAST P.
CROSS RD.
ACOAXET RD.
ATLANTIC AVE
ACOAXET
MASS
R.I.
RICHMOND P.
QUICKSAND PT.
del. P.W.B.

BIRDING IN THE WESTPORT-DARTMOUTH REGION

Wayne R. Petersen, Abington

Massachusetts has long been known for its ecological diversity. Habitats run the gamut from modest, spruce-topped mountains in the northwest to the unbroken sandy strands of Cape Cod. Rolling interior hills flank the fertile flood plains of the Connecticut River Valley. In the northeast is the Merrimac River, with its wide estuarine mouth, so important to our birdlife, in historic Newburyport. The rocky seashore of Essex County provides a fine coastal plain. Offshore, some of the richest waters in New England swarm with myriads of marine forms. With such diverse habitats all within about a two-hours' drive, it is little wonder that Massachusetts offers fine opportunities to the birder interested in seeing a variety of species.

Moreover, Massachusetts lies at the range limits of a number of species of eastern North American birds. For a few, such as the Gray-cheeked Thrush and the Arctic Tern, this state constitutes a southern boundary. A greater number, however, reach the northern periphery of their ranges here. Birds in this group include Clapper Rail, Carolina Wren, White-eyed Vireo, Hooded Warbler and Seaside Sparrow. For the local bird-finder wishing to become familiar with some of these southern forms, few areas exist finer than the region along the western shore of Buzzard's Bay, near Westport and Dartmouth.

To reach the Westport-Dartmouth area from the north, take Rte. 24 into Fall River, where signs will direct you to I-195 East. After about two miles on I-195, turn south toward Horseneck Beach on Rte. 88 which leads into the heart of the Westport region.

Along this highway are extensive low Red Maple swamps interspersed with stands of Tupelo trees. In the drier areas, the slopes are covered with several species of oak and hickory, American Holly, Sassafras and a few Slippery Elms. These, along with many less common species, all typify the southeastern coastal-plain flora characteristic of the Upper Austral Zone, here seen at its northern fringe.

The best path to follow in this area will vary considerably depending upon the season. Since the region can be of interest at all times of the year, the following remarks will describe in a general way some of the areas which the writer has found most lucrative over the years.

Taking Hix Bridge Road to the right off Rte. 88 will bring you to an intersection in front of Fred and Ann's Restaurant. Again to the right several hundred yards north at Central Village, you will see Adamsville Road on the left. Follow this road west all the way to Adamsville, Rhode Island (near a small mill pond), where River Road will be seen on the left. River Road quickly re-enters Massachusetts and parallels the West Branch of the Westport River all the way to the little beach community of Acoaxet.

Both Adamsville Road and River Road take the bird-finder through fine birding habitat. The countryside is rural, with scattered dairy farms, old stone walls, secondary woodlots, brushy hedgerows and overgrown pastures. Here and there are pockets of both Red and White Cedar, the latter containing many of our interesting native orchids and carnivorous plants.

At selected stops along Adamsville Road, it is not at all uncommon to hear the husky songs of breeding White-eyed Vireos or the buzzy voices of Blue-winged Warblers, anytime from late spring through midsummer. Wood Pewees, Crested Flycatchers, Tufted Titmice, Veeries, Black-and-White Warblers and Ovenbirds are almost certain to be among the morning chorus in this area.

Once on River Road, the brushy thickets along the shore of the river nearly always have a Carolina Wren or two; and vireos of several species can often be heard singing at the same time. During the winter these same thickets are likely to hold a surprising variety of semi-hardy winterers -- all the mimics, Hermit Thrushes, blackbirds, towhees and a good variety of sparrows. The river itself contains a number of islands, many of which are marked by the bulky and conspicuous nests of Ospreys, certainly one of the ornithological highlights of the region. The Ospreys are easily observed from late March through early fall, but are at their best during the breeding season, when they can be seen bringing fish to the nestlings. There is often quite an array of herons and egrets wading in the shallows; and the Yellow-crowned Night Heron is as regular here as anywhere in Massachusetts. From late fall through early spring, the islands often provide perches for various species of hawks; while the river waters serve as a feeding area for Mute Swans and a variety of ducks, including Gadwalls, Canvasbacks and the three species of merganser.

Throughout the summer the wooded slopes on the opposite side of the road serve as home for a pair of Broad-winged Hawks; and most of the common breeding warblers can generally be heard singing, especially early in the morning. On these same slopes the patient listener may occasionally hear the ringing song of the Hooded Warbler, a rare summer resident in the area.

At the end of River Road, Cockeast Pond will be found on the right. In the winter months and in spring, this pond generally holds Mute Swans, Canvasbacks and, rarely, a Redhead. The brushy tangles at the north end of the pond are excellent habitat for Willow Flycatchers, Carolina Wrens, White-eyed Vireos and an occasional pair of breeding Yellow-breasted Chats.

Beyond Cockeast Pond lies a rocky shingle beach, which runs west to Quicksand Point. Offshore in season one can generally see both cormorants, loons, Horned Grebes, eiders and scoters. Small groups of Purple Sandpipers feed on the wave-washed rocks. Barrow's Goldeneye, Harlequin Duck and King Eider have all been recorded here from time to time. The beach itself, along with that of nearby Richmond Pond, often has Piping Plovers and flocks of ground birds in early spring. House Finches (!) and Savannah (Ipswich) Sparrows frequent the adjacent dune areas.

To bird along the East Branch of the Westport River, the visitor should return through Adamsville and then turn right on Cornell Road. At the intersection with Main Road, turn right again and follow it (see map) until Rte. 88 is reached, near where the bridge crosses the river. The Horseneck Beach Reservation, which is immediately beyond the bridge, is usually swarming with sun worshipers during the warmer months; but the extensive salt marshes and Pitch Pine barrens behind the beach often produce birds of interest. The salt meadows hold nesting marsh sparrows, and a diligent search can sometimes produce a Clapper Rail. The pine barrens contain many large, dead trees, which frequently serve as winter hawk perches. Great Horned Owls have been known to breed in old Osprey nests in this area.

At the western end of Horseneck Beach is a small, grassy peninsula called Gooseberry Neck. The tiny ponds and surrounding thickets there make this area particularly attractive to migrant shorebirds and landbirds, especially after the passage of a cold front in September or October. In late April and early May, a prolonged, southeasterly storm can push phalaropes onto shore in this area, sometimes in spectacular abundance. Such recent stragglers as the Ruff, American Avocet and Swallow-tailed Kite all testify to the merits of this choice spot.

At the eastern end of the beach, the road turns north and becomes Horseneck Road. Almost at once, Allen's Pond will be seen below the farm on the right. Here, the adjacent salt meadows support a large colony of Seaside and Sharp-tailed Sparrows, and Clapper Rails are regular. Few Seaside Sparrow colonies in Massachusetts are so readily accessible as this one. In spring and summer, many herons and an occasional Glossy Ibis feed in these marshes, while Least Terns are a common sight over the pond. In the fall, Peregrine Falcons may be seen harrying the many waterfowl that concentrate on Allen's Pond, including such fancy species as Whistling Swan and European Wigeon.

Continuing north along Horseneck Road, the bird-finder will pass many inviting woodlots and brushy swales, all with birds much like those described for the Acoaxet area. The farmlands in this area should be inspected closely for Red-shouldered Hawks, which surprisingly still remain regular in this part of Massachusetts. Also, several stations exist in this section for breeding Hooded Warblers.

About a mile beyond Allen's Pond, take the right fork of Horseneck Road and follow it until Allen's Neck Road appears on the right. Allen's Neck Road eventually becomes Barney's Joy Road, which leads to Demarest Lloyd State Park. This small reservation includes dry Pitch Pine and oak woods, a freshwater pond that is good for ducks, and a fine shingle beach with extensive flats at low tide. Piping Plovers are regular here all summer, and Savannah and Grasshopper Sparrows usually breed in the short grass field behind the beach. At dusk, Great Horned Owls can often be heard hooting in the woods along the Slocum River. Other breeding birds of this general area in recent years have included Barn Owls, Blue-gray Gnatcathers, Lawrence's Warbler and, possibly, Red-headed Woodpeckers. Late in the fall, large flocks of Canada Geese, Ring-billed and Bonaparte's Gulls, Dunlins and Sanderlings gather on the flats at low tide; and during the winter months, both Golden and Bald Eagles have been seen hunting the river and its adjacent marsh islands.

While this description touches upon some of the more productive spots in the Westport-Dartmouth area, it is by no means exhaustive. Its objective is to stimulate the interest of potential visitors, so that they may discover for themselves why this region is one of the truly unique birding districts in eastern Massachusetts.

MUTE SWANS

Wayne Hanley, Massachusetts Audubon Society

On a recent railroad trip along the Connecticut shore, we noted at least two swans on every stream headed into Long Island Sound.

When we returned to the office, we received a note from a correspondent in South Yarmouth who mentioned that Mute Swans "seem to be turning up more and more frequently on the Bass River and small ponds."

Indeed, Mute Swans are turning up more frequently. If we all live long enough, we'll probably see them wintering along the Maine coast.

The Mute Swan is the huge white swan one sees as it sails sedately across the pond on many New England town commons. It is a European bird which was brought to America as poultry. Supposedly domesticated, the Mute Swan became an ornament on the ponds of the wealthy who summered on Long Island, New York.

When E. H. Forbush wrote a review of the birds of New England in 1925, the only swans he mentioned were the Whistling Swan, which breeds in the Arctic and occasionally becomes lost and wanders above New England on the way to Chesapeake Bay, and the Trumpeter Swan, a western bird that rarely has appeared in New England and for many years was an endangered species. He also noted that a Whooper Swan of Europe reputedly had been shot in Washington County, Maine, in 1903, but that he could find no trace of the specimen.

Forbush was spared the mention of a Mute Swan, for there was none wild in New England at that time.

In 1955, Ludlow Griscom could refer accurately to the Mute Swan as a "rare vagrant" in Massachusetts. He commented that the birds occasionally flew into the Commonwealth from an active colony in Little Compton, R.I.

Although Mute Swans had bred for several years in Connecticut, the first recorded nesting in the wild in Rhode Island was reported from Briggs Marsh in Little Compton in 1948. It was the nucleus of the active colony Griscom referred to. By 1965, the wild swan population in Rhode Island had risen to 416 birds.

At the moment, it is doubtful that anyone has accurate figures on the wild Mute Swan population in New England. It is known, for instance, that at least 300 birds now live on Martha's Vineyard. When an ice sheet covers the east branch of the Westport River in Westport, there must be at least 300 wild swans feeding at the leading edge of the ice. As the correspondent noted, there are wild swans on the Bass River. And the birds abound in Rhode Island and Connecticut wherever salt water keeps river shallows open.

So far as anyone knows, the New England population arose from domesticated Muts Swans that escaped from Long Island estates. There is a good possibility, however, that some of the birds escaped from captive flocks held by New Englanders. For instance, at Durham, N.H., there is a pair of Mute Swans that produces a few young. To date, none seems to have survived the gosling stage.

Mute Swans lay two to eleven eggs and if the nest survives raccoon raids or some game warden tiptoeing out to destroy it, the young still must grow fast enough and large enough to escape snapping turtles. Once Mute Swans mature, they can take care of themselves--and very well, too.

THE BIRD OBSERVER SUMMARY FOR JANUARY 1974

The month of January showed much fluctuation in temperature, from a low of -3°F. on the 17th and 18th to highs in the 50's & 60's on the 21st through the 27th. The first snowfall of the season started as an icestorm on December 31st, changing into snow by Jan. 2nd. Other major snowfalls occurred on the 9th, along with many flurries throughout the month.

Horned Grebe was notably deficient in numbers throughout the state, while Red-necked Grebe was present in small numbers off the rocky North Shore, occurring in numbers only on the Cape (14 at Dennis).

The mild month of December was probably responsible for the continued presence of five American Bitterns, as well as a count of 32 Black-crowned Night Herons apparently wintering in Quincy.

Unusually high numbers of several species of dabbling ducks were recorded; such as 45 Gadwall at Plum Island, 23 Pintail at Yarmouth and three Blue-winged Teal at Sandwich.

The bay and sea ducks were present in normal numbers, with a possible increase in Barrow's Goldeneye there being 17 individuals scattered along the coast.

Eleven Goshawks were reported; whether this high total represents a true incursion or rather the general increase in numbers of this species, is indeterminate. However, for comparison, no Goshawks were printed in Bird Observer records for January 1973. This was clearly not a flight year for Rough-legged Hawk, with only 10 individuals reported.

The Gyrfalcon continued at the southern outer-Cape region; the possibility of this being the same individual which was present last winter has been suggested - this bird being identical in plumage to last years bird.

Noteworthy was an immature Purple Gallinule trapped and photographed in New Bedford, as well as a concentration of six Common Gallinules in West Harwich.

Wintering shorebirds included 230 Red Knot at Revere, two Semipalmated Sandpipers and a Marbled Godwit lingering on the Cape.

The Mew Gull returned for its third consecutive year at Newburyport Harbor towards the end of the month.

There was no flight of alcids after December; Dovekies being notably absent throughout this winter in our region. A Black Guillemot at Manomet Point was unusually far south, although this area does serve as suitable habitat for this species in winter.

Two Barn Owls were reported, one being the bird roosting in the pine groves of Long Island in Boston Harbor.

A Red-bellied Woodpecker in South Natick was unique, whereas five individual Red-headed Woodpeckers were observed. These may represent lingering birds from the flight of last fall.

The unusually high temperatures in the fourth week of the month were probably responsible for a Barn Swallow seen flying over Plum Island. It is interesting to note that several other Barn Swallows were found in the Northeast during this period.

Other passerines of note included: five Long-billed Marsh Wrens in Harwich, four Ruby-crowned Kinglets, eight Orange-crowned Warblers, 38 Palm Warblers, two Western Tanagers in Chatham and Rockport, and three Dickcissels.

The Redpoll flight arrived in mid-month bringing with it two Hoary Redpolls to Orleans.

Wintering sparrows on the Cape included 20 Seaside at Fort Hill, Eastham, a Lark Sparrow at Orleans, and a Clay-colored Sparrow at the same area in Orleans.

R.R.V.

Common Loon:			
26	Plymouth Harbor	13	M.B.O.
Red-throated Loon:			
27	Eastham	18	B.Nikula
Red-necked Grebe:			
thr.	Dennis	max.14(Jan.24)	B.Nikula#
25,26	Gloucester,Winthrop	2,1	M.McClellan,R.Veit#
Horned Grebe:			
5	Cape Ann	max.10(low)	BBC(L.Jodrey)
Pied-billed Grebe:			
5,6	Woburn,Falmouth	14,18	BBC(D.Weaver),BBC(R.Pease)
11	Lakeville	13	P.Alden
Great Cormorant:			
1	Long Island	36	BBC(E&H Donovan)
5,19	Cape Ann, Magnolia	50,25	BBC(L.Jodrey),BBC(E.Pyburn)
Great Blue Heron:			
20,23	S.Chatham,Oak Bluffs(M.V.)	20,13	CCBC(Baines),M.Hancock
Black-crowned Night Heron:			
8,28	Eastham,Quincy	12,32	R.Pease#,D.Brown
American Bittern:			
1,18;6	Ipswich;P.I.	1,1;1	M.Wood,E&M Foster;M.McClellan
8,20	Eastham,S.Chatham	1,1	R.Pease,CCBC(D.Baines)
Whistling Swan:			
5-20	Manchester(Black Beach)	1	S.Garrett,E.Pyburn# & v.o.
Canada Goose:			
thr.	Plymouth Harbor	500±	M.B.O.
Brant:			
22	Plymouth Beach	max.40(low)	J.Loughlin
Snow Goose:			
24	Newburyport	2	M.Gardler
Gadwall:			
thr.	Orleans	7	B.Nikula
6,26	P.I.,Monomoy	45,3	M.McClellan,W.Harrington#
Pintail:			
thr.,6,26	Yarmouth,P.I.,Monomoy	max.23,9,15	B.Nikula,M.McClellan,v.o.
Green-winged Teal:			
5	Sandwich	26	R.Pease#
Blue-winged Teal:			
5	Sandwich	3	R.Pease
European Wigeon:			
thr.	Cohasset,Orleans	1,1	v.o.,B.Nikula,W.Bailey
American Wigeon:			
thr.,15,19	Orleans,Plymouth,Squantum	50,19,6	v.o.,M.B.O.,R.Veit#
Northern Shoveler:			
26	Monomoy,Winthrop	3,1	W.Harrington#,R.Veit#
Wood Duck:			
thr.,1,22	Falmouth,Chatham,Belmont	1 m.,3,1	v.o.,V.Laux,S.Raabe
Redhead:			
20	Plymouth,Falmouth	14,7	B.Sorrie,D.Burrough#
Ring-necked Duck:			
6,26	Falmouth,Pocasset	55,23	BBC(R.Pease),M&A Argue#
Canvasback:			
6,13	Falmouth,Acoaxet	145,75	BBC(R.Pease),BBC(T.Athearn)
Greater Scaup:			
thr.	Newburyport,Revere	4,000+;12,000	v.o.,R.Veit#
Lesser Scaup:			
thr.	Revere	6+	R.Veit
12,26	Orleans, Monomoy	15,30	C&B Holdridge,W.Harrington
Barrow's Goldeneye:			
2-19	Newburyport	max.3(Jan.16)	R.Forster,v.o.
2,6	Wareham(river),Falmouth	1 m.,1 f.	R.Maxim,BBC(R.Pease)
12&13	Magnolia	1 m.	H.D'Entremont#,W.Petersen#
19	Manchester,Quincy	1,1	BBC(E.Pyburn),L.DeWald
23	Plymouth Harbor	1	H&D Carmichael
Bufflehead:			
thr.	Newburyport,Revere	600,250	BBC(W.Van Cor),R.Veit
Oldsquaw:			
6,25	Marion,Manomet	40,100	SSBC(Anderson),M.B.O.

Harlequin Duck:			
thr.	Magnolia	4	v.o.
Common Eider:			
25,26	Boston Harbor,Chatham	4500;15,000	D.Brown,C.Goodrich
26	Plymouth Harbor,Winthrop	4000±,1800	M.B.O.,R.Veit
King Eider:			
thr.	Nauset	1 f.	B.Nikula
3,5-6	Manomet,S.Chatham	1 m.,1 m.	W.Petersen,v.o.
20,25	Woods Hole,Long Island	1 m.,1 m.	D.Briggs,D.Brown
26	Winthrop	1 f.	R.Veit
White-winged Scoter:			
1	Wollaston	455	BBC(E&H Donovan)
Surf Scoter:			
5,6	Cape Ann,Marion	3,14	BBC(L.Jodrey),SSBC(Anderson)
26	Winthrop	6	R.Veit
Black Scoter:			
5	Cape Ann	2	BBC(L.Jodrey)
Ruddy Duck:			
6	Falmouth	18	BBC(R.Pease)
Hooded Merganser:			
6,13	Wareham,Rockport	15,2	SSBC(Anderson),W.Petersen#
17,19	Cohasset,Newburyport	4,2	R.Veit#,BBC(E.Pyburn)
26	Monomoy	20	W.Harrington#
Common Merganser:			
1,16	Littleton,Newburyport	18,20	J.Baird,R.Forster
20;25	Plymouth,S.Chatham;Squantum	5,1;9	M.B.O.,D.Baines;D.Brown
Red-breasted Merganser:			
20	Chatham	150	CCBC(D.Baines)
Goshawk:			
thr.	11 localities	11 individuals	v.o.
Sharp-shinned Hawk:			
thr.	7 localities	singles	v.o.
Cooper's Hawk:			
thr.,16,24	Orleans,Sandwich,Chatham	1,1,1	v.o.,R.Pease,V.Laux
Red-tailed Hawk:			
thr.	16 localities	21 individuals	v.o.
Red-shouldered Hawk:			
13-27,25	Topsfield,Lincoln	1,1	G.Soucy,P.Butler
Rough-legged Hawk:			
thr.	8 localities	10 individuals(low)	v.o.
Bald Eagle:			
1	Orleans	1 imm.	v.o.
Marsh Hawk:			
thr.	6 localities	9 individuals	v.o.
Gyrfalcon:			
thr.	Outer Cape	1 gray phase	W.Bailey# & v.o.
Merlin:			
6,20	Fairhaven,P.I.	1,1	SSBC(Anderson),R.Emery#
20	Brewster	1	CCBC(Baines)
American Kestrel:			
thr.	6 localities	12 individuals	v.o.
Ruffed Grouse:			
thr.	6 localities	17 individuals	v.o.
Clapper Rail:			
1-6,6,6-8	Duxbury,Bourne,Eastham	1,1,1	M.B.O.,R.O'Hara,v.o.
15,20	Wellfleet(WBWS),Hyannisport	2,2	W.Bailey,R.Pease
Virginia Rail:			
thr.	5 localities	11 individuals	v.o.
Sora:			
thr.,14	W.Harwich,Ipswich	max.5,2	B.Nikula#,BBC(J.Berry)
Purple Gallinule:			
4	New Bedford	1	J.Fernandez#
Common Gallinule:			
thr.	W.Harwich	max.6	B.Nikula
Piping Plover:			
20	Gay Head(M.V.)	1	M.Hancock
Killdeer:			
thr.	12 localities	16 individuals	v.o.

Black-bellied Plover:			
1	Orleans	18	V.Laux
Ruddy Turnstone:			
1	N.Scituate	6	R.Forster#
American Woodcock:			
1	Sandwich	1	R.Pease
Common Snipe:			
thr.	9 localities	46 individuals	v.o.
Greater Yellowlegs:			
1-8	Squantum	1	D.Brown
Red Knot:			
26	Revere	230	R.Veit#,S.Perkins
Purple Sandpiper:			
5,19,27	Cape Ann,N.Scituate,Revere	400,600,120	BBC(L.Jodrey),J.Nichols#,R.Veit#
Dunlin:			
26,27	Revere,Cohasset	200,400	R.Veit#,J.Nichols#
Semipalmated Sandpiper:			
6,10	Chatham,Barnstable	1,1	v.o.,V.Laux
Marbled Godwit:			
thr.	Chatham	1	v.o.
Sanderling:			
thr.	Revere	750-800	R.Veit#
Glaucous Gull:			
thr.,1	Gloucester,Barnstable	2,1	v.o.,R.Pease
Iceland Gull:			
thr.	6 localities	30 individuals	v.o.
Ring-billed Gull:			
28	Squantum	100	D.Brown
Black-headed Gull:			
thr.;20	Squantum;Orleans	max.17(Jan.26);1	D.Brown;C.Goodrich,B.Nikula
Bonaparte's Gull:			
16	Newburyport	100	R.Forster
Mew Gull:			
29	Newburyport	1 ad.	M.Gardler
Laughing Gull:			
20	Chatham	1	D.Baines
Little Gull:			
29	Newburyport	1 ad.	M.Gardler
Razorbill:			
13	Gloucester	1	W.Petersen#
Dovekie:			
13	Rockport	2	S.Swaebe
Black Guillemot:			
3,13	Manomet,Cape Ann	1,16	W.Petersen
Barn Owl:			
1-26,20&28	Long Island,Orleans	1,1	G.Soucy# & v.o.,B.Nikula#
Screech Owl:			
1,6	E.Middleboro,Saugus	1,1	K.Anderson,A.Agush#
20,23	Topsfield,Milton	1,1	S.Garrett#,R.Emery#
Great Horned Owl:			
1,3,29	Littleton,Milton,Middleboro	2,2,3	J.Baird,D.Brown#,D.Briggs
Snowy Owl:			
thr.,15,17	P.I.,Squantum,Wellfleet	1-3,1,1	v.o.,E.Morrier,fide B.Nikula
Barred Owl:			
5,26,29	Belmont,Danvers,Middleboro	singles	R.Veit#,G.Soucy,D.Briggs
Short-eared Owl:			
thr.	P.I.,Squantum,Eastham	1,1-5,2	v.o.
thr.	Middleboro	2	D.Briggs#
Saw-whet Owl:			
thr.,10,20	P.I.,Belmont,Orleans	singles	v.o.,R.Stymeist#,C.Goodrich#
Belted Kingfisher:			
thr.	14 localities	21 individuals	v.o.
Red-bellied Woodpecker:			
12-23	South Natick	1	H.Biggart & v.o.
Red-headed Woodpecker:			
thr.	Woburn,Rockport	1,2	v.o.
thr.	Dover,Yarmouth	1,1	v.o.

Horned Lark:			
8,13	P.I.,Westport	60,100	M&A Argue,BBC(T.Athearn)
Barn Swallow:			
31	P.I.	1	H&M Lewis,P.Parsons,L.Jodrey
Fish Crow:			
thr.	West Roxbury	max.134(Jan.16)	D.Brown
Boreal Chickadee:			
6-28	P.I.	1	v.o.
Red-breasted Nuthatch:			
1,2,5	Chatham,P.I.,Squantum	5,1,2	V.Laux,G.Soucy#,H.D'Entremont#
11,20,26	Lincoln,Annisquam,Long Isl.	2,2,4	H.Foley,M&A Argue,D.Brown
House Wren:			
13	Orleans	1	C.Goodrich,B.Nikula
Winter Wren:			
1;12	Tewksbury,Littleton;Eastham	1,1;1	M.Wilson,J.Baird;CCBC
13;20	Middleboro,Lakeville;Ipswich	singles	D.Briggs,R.Turner;J.Berry
Carolina Wren:			
1,6,7	Littleton,Falmouth,Carlisle	singles	J.Baird,R.Pease,K.Hart
10,13	Attleboro,S.Dartmouth	singles	B.Keil,BBC(T.Athearn)
23	Rochester	1	J.Stairs
Long-billed Marsh Wren:			
thr.,5	W.Harwich,N.Sandwich	5,1	B.Nikula#,B.Sorrie#
Gray Catbird:			
thr.	Falmouth	1-7	v.o.
7,19	Bedford,Mattapoisett	1,1	P.Wade,G.Mock
Brown Thrasher:			
thr.	6 localities	8 individuals	v.o.
American Robin:			
19	Marion	20+	D.Buckman
Hermit Thrush:			
thr.	10 localities	11 individuals	v.o.
Eastern Bluebird:			
thr.,12	W.Yarmouth,S.Chatham	12,3	D.Baines#,CCBC(D.Baines)
21,27	Lincoln,E.Dennis	1,4	A.Davis,BBC(A.Tait)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet:			
6,20	Falmouth,Vineyard Haven	2,1	R.Pease,M.Hancock
28	Manomet	1	M.B.O.
Cedar Waxwing:			
7,10	Bedford	4,8	P.Wade
Northern Shrike:			
thr.,10	Orleans,Barnstable	1,1	C.Goodrich,B.Nikula,V.Laux
20,22,23	Cambridge,W.Newbury,P.I.	singles	T&U Marvin,C.Simmons,W.Drummond
25,26-30	Weymouth,P.I.	1,1	J.O'Regan,v.o.
Loggerhead Shrike:			
21,29	Barnstable,Ipswich	1,1	R.Pease,P.Parsons
Orange-crowned Warbler:			
2;6	Brewster;Falmouth,Sandwich	4;1,3	C.Goodrich#;v.o.
Yellow-rumped Warbler:			
1,3	Long Island,Bridgewater	15,10	G.Soucy#,D.Briggs#
6,13	Marion,P.I.	10,12	SSBC(K.Anderson),S.Swaebe
Pine Warbler:			
thr.	W.Harwich,Chatham	1-2,1	B.Nikula,V.Saunders
6	Falmouth	3	BBC(R.Pease)
Palm Warbler:			
1,6	Orleans,Falmouth area	10,28(total)	V.Laux,BBC(R.Pease)
Northern Waterthrush:			
6	Topsfield	1	J.Thomas
Common Yellowthroat:			
6,13	Falmouth,Marion	1,1	BBC(R.Pease),D.Buckman
Yellow-breasted Chat:			
1-20,10	Lanesville,Milton	1,1	L.Jodrey# & v.o.,M.Hackett
Eastern Meadowlark:			
thr.	13 localities	80 individuals	v.o.
Redwinged Blackbird:			
thr.	Abington	200	E.Pearson
2,12	Pembroke,Ipswich	20,4	W.Petersen#,BBC(J.Berry)
Northern Oriole:			
thr.	5 localities	singles	v.o.

Rusty Blackbird:			
1,30	Orleans,Middleboro	1,5	V.Laux# & v.o.,D.Elkin
Common Grackle:			
1,6	Orleans,Fairfield	1,17	V.Laux,K.Anderson
13	Chilmark(M.V.)	1	M.Hancock
Brown-headed Cowbird:			
2,27	Pembroke,Lynnfield	130,300+	W.Petersen#,R.Veit#
Western Tanager:			
1-12,1-27	Rockport,Chatham	1,1	L.Jodrey & v.o.,V.Saunders & v.o
Cardinal:			
thr.	Vineyard Haven(M.V.)	2	M.Hancock
Dickcissel:			
thr.,1,12	Beverly,Orleans,Ipswich	singles	J&D Day,V.Laux,BBC(J.Berry)
Evening Grosbeak:			
4,6,13	Byfield,Marion,Dartmouth	125,25,20	T.Joyce,K.Anderson,T.Athearn
Purple Finch:			
6,20	Marion Ipswich	7,5	K.Anderson,J.Berry
House Finch:			
5,20	Lexington,Lanesville	25,12	BBC(E.Taylor),R.Emery#
Pine Grosbeak:			
20	W.Falmouth	7	D.Briggs
Hoary Redpoll:			
30	Orleans	2	R.Clem,W.Bailey
Common Redpoll:			
1&2,12	Beverly,Middleboro	1,4	G.Soucy#,D.Briggs#
26,28	Squantum,Ipswich	8,20	R.Veit#,E.Foster
30,31	Orleans,P.I.	22,40	R.Clem#,L.Jodrey#
Pine Siskin:			
1,3,5	Beverly,P.I.,Rockport area	100,200,300	G.Soucy,L.Jodrey#,BBC(L.Jodrey)
Red Crossbill:			
1;6	Chatham;Falmouth,P.I.	28;10,12	V.Laux;R.Pease,M.McClellan
13,23	Chilmark,Edgartown(M.V.)	9,26	M.Hancock
White-winged Crossbill:			
26,28	Chatham,P.I.	25,28	B.Nikula,M.McClellan
Rufous-sided Towhee:			
thr.	16 localities	41 individuals	v.o.
Savannah Sparrow:			
4,6	Duxbury,Fairhaven	2,20	W.Petersen#,SSBC(K.Anderson)
22	Plymouth Beach	2	J.Loughlin
Sharp-tailed Sparrow:			
thr.	Eastham(F.H.)	10+	B.Nikula & v.o.
Seaside Sparrow:			
thr.	Eastham(F.H.)	max.20+(Jan.12)	B.Nikula & v.o.
Vesper Sparrow:			
5	Fairhaven	3	G.Mock
8	Middleboro,Barnstable	1 b., 1	D.Briggs,R.Pease
Lark Sparrow:			
thr. 15	Orleans	1 ad.	V.Laux & v.o.
Dark-eyed Junco:			
thr.,11	Dartmouth,Lincoln	20-30,20-30	P.Regan,H.W.Foley
Tree Sparrow:			
thr.	Middleboro,Marion	130(55 b.),300-400	D.Briggs,R.Harlow
Clay-colored Sparrow:			
1	Orleans	1(from Dec.)	B.Nikula & v.o.
Field Sparrow:			
thr.,20	Beverly,Brewster	5,12	G.Soucy,CCBC(D.Baines)
White-crowned Sparrow:			
thr.,1	Danvers,Chatham	1,1	E.Pyburn,V.Laux & v.o.
Fox Sparrow:			
thr.,1	Manchester,Chatham	3,4	H.Weissberg,V.Laux
3,5	Brookline,Lexington	1,1	A.Agush,E.Taylor
20,30	Lanesville,Beverly	1,2	M.Argue#,J&D Day
Swamp Sparrow:			
6,12	Duxbury,Ipswich	1,3	M.B.O.,BBC(J.Berry)
Lapland Longspur:			
thr.,4,22	P.I.,Duxbury,Plymouth Bch.	max.30,3,9	v.o.,W.Petersen#,M.B.O.
Snow Bunting:			
13,14	Dartmouth, Barnstable	30,400+	BBC(T.Athearn),R.Pease

THE BIRD OBSERVER SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 1974

The month of February began with subzero temperatures and alternating periods of cloudy, then clear weather. The heaviest snow (4 to 8 inches) fell over Cape Cod and the Islands on the 7th. A prolonged southwesterly flow brought warm air across our area on February 14th, with highs in the 40's and a few readings of 50 degrees. This warm spell was short-lived, and by Saturday, February 16th, temperatures dropped about 10 degrees below normal. A heavy rain occurred on Sunday night, February 17th. At midmonth, temperatures were above normal with periods of rain on the 19th, 22nd and 23rd. Boston recorded 1.33 inches of rain, and the wind gusted to 62 m.p.h. on the 23rd. At months end, temperatures remained moderately above normal with a high of 56° at Boston on the 28th.

With the exception of some interesting feeder birds, birding in February is usually dull and nonproductive. Stragglers are being eliminated by the weather, food supplies are depleted and the winter residents are wandering more. The warmer weather during the last week of the month gave promise of spring with the arrivals of the Redwings and Grackles.

Loons and grebes were present in fair numbers, and the Northern Fulmar continued to recuperate on Nantucket. Anseriformes were seasonably low but the following were noteworthy: two Whistling Swans, 22 Gadwalls at Plum Island, 33 Pintails, two European Wigeons, 10 Barrow's Goldeneyes, 15,000 Oldsquaws at Surfside, Nantucket, and as many as 9 Harlequin Ducks at Magnolia.

Good numbers of raptors were seen. The number of Goshawks remained above normal; there were five reports of wintering Red-shouldered Hawks, yet the reports for Rough-legged Hawks were way down. A Golden Eagle as well as a Bald Eagle were found in the Newburyport area. A Gyrfalcon was observed in Eastham, and a Peregrine Falcon was found in Salisbury. A female American Kestrel killed a Bobwhite outside the office window of the Manomet Bird Observatory; certainly an interesting report considering the quail outweighs the Kestrel by about 50 grams.

The Common, Black-headed and Little Gulls continued in Newburyport Harbor. Alcids remained in very low numbers. A Barn Owl was photographed in a heavily populated area of Cambridge. There were three reports of Snowy Owls, and a Long-eared Owl was present in Orleans. The Red-headed Woodpeckers continued in their respective localities, and the Red-bellied Woodpecker was seen again in South Natick.

Early in the month, many reports of dead or dying Blue Jays were reported. Several carcasses were taken to the University of Massachusetts field station in Waltham, however, as yet no diagnosis as to the cause has been determined. The Boreal Chickadee continued at Plum Island, and 185 Fish Crows were at West Roxbury. A Long-billed Marsh Wren continued in Harwich, and a Varied Thrush was in Billerica. An Ovenbird was present in Sandwich for several days, and two reports of Yellow-breasted Chats were received. Dickcissels were reported from seven localities, and nine Hoary Redpolls were observed among the increasing number of Common Redpolls.

R.H.S.

Common Loon:			
28	P.I.	34	R.Forster,K.Hamilton
Red-throated Loon:			
28	P.I.	5	R.Forster,K.Hamilton
Red-necked Grebe:			
thr.,16	Dennis,Cape Ann	4,3	B.Nikula,BBC(R&D Hale)
16,23	Manomet	7,1	B.Sorrie,W.Petersen#
Horned Grebe:			
16,23	Cape Ann,Manomet	6,6	BBC(R&D Hale),W.Petersen#
Pied-billed Grebe:			
9,10	Dartmouth,Lakeville	4,4	R.O'Hara#,K.Anderson#
Northern Fulmar:			
thr.	Nantucket	1(from Dec.28)	E.Andrews
Great Cormorant:			
16	Nahant(Egg Rock)	100	W.Petersen#
Double-crested Cormorant:			
24	North Scituate	1	D.Briggs#
Great Blue Heron:			
thr.	13 localities	22 individuals	v.o.

Black-crowned Night Heron:			
thr.	Eastham,Chatham	15,6	B.Nikula, v.o.
American Bittern:			
thr.,13	Eastham,Chatham	2,1	B.Nikula, v.o.
17,24	Adamsville,Harwich	1,1	T.Athearn,R.Veit#
Mute Swan:			
thr.	Acoaxet	max.45(Feb.27)	R.Emerson
Whistling Swan:			
thr.,27	Magnolia,Acoaxet	1,1	v.o.,D&R Emerson
Canada Goose:			
thr.	So.Dartmouth	500+	P.Regan
Brant:			
2,9	Duxbury,Squantum	40+,130	BBC(W.Harrington),E.Morrier
18,23	Chatham,Plymouth	22,80	J.Bryant,W.Petersen#
Snow Goose:			
9 on	Newburyport	2	v.o.
Black Duck:			
23	Newburyport	1000	BBC(C.Littlefield)
Gadwall:			
thr.,18,28	Orleans,Manchester,P.I.	2,4,22	B.Nikula#,J.Berry,R.Forster#
Pintail:			
thr.	11 localities	33 individuals	v.o.
Green-winged Teal:			
thr.	Orleans	10	v.o.
European Wigeon:			
thr.	Orleans,Cohasset	1,1 m.	v.o.
American Wigeon:			
thr.	Orleans,Belmont	40,21	v.o.
Northern Shoveler:			
thr.,18,22	Orleans,Eastham,E.Orleans	1,6,5	v.o.,J.Bryant,C.Goodrich#
Wood Duck:			
thr.	4 localities	10 individuals	v.o.
Redhead:			
9	Falmouth	3	CCBC(D.Baines)
Canvasback:			
9,28	Falmouth,Newburyport	120,17	CCBC(D.Baines),R.Forster#
Greater Scaup:			
9	Newburyport	4000	R.Stymeist,R.Veit
Barrow's Goldeneye:			
9,17	Newburyport,Nantucket	6,2	R.Stymeist#,R.Veit#
18,23	Wellfleet,Plymouth	1,1	W.Bailey#,W.Petersen#
Bufflehead:			
23	Plymouth	120	SSBC(W.Petersen)
Oldsquaw:			
18	Nantucket(Surfside)	12-15,000	E&C Andrews
Harlequin Duck:			
9-19	Magnolia	4-9	v.o.
Common Eider:			
12,17,23	Revere,Nantucket,Plymouth	2500+,4000+,2500+	R.Arnold,R.Veit#,W.Petersen#
King Eider:			
15,17-23	Newburyport,Rockport	1,1	R.Forster,S&J Harrison
19,26,27	P.I.,Nahant,S.Duxbury	singles	W.Petersen#,S.Garrett,D.Briggs
White-winged Scoter:			
17	Nantucket	850	R.Veit
Surf Scoter:			
16,23	Salisbury,Manomet	2,1	J.Berry,W.Petersen#
Black Scoter:			
17,18	Nantucket,Magnolia	120,2	R.Veit#,L.Robinson#
Ruddy Duck:			
9,17	Falmouth,Orleans	12,10	D.Baines#,B.Nikula#
Hooded Merganser:			
thr.	6 localities	12 individuals	v.o.
Common Merganser:			
1,9	Rowley,W.Newbury	9,8	D.Alexander,R.Stymeist#
17	Adamsville,Squantum	10,4	T.Athearn,R.Pasquier#
Goshawk:			
thr.	9 localities	singles	v.o.

Sharp-shinned Hawk:			
thr.	7 localities	singles	v.o.
Cooper's Hawk:			
8,9,10	P.I.,Newbury,N.Middleboro	singles	H.Bates#,R.Veit#,fide D.Briggs
Red-tailed Hawk:			
thr.	9 localities	17 individuals	v.o.
Red-shouldered Hawk:			
9,15	Salisbury,W.Roxbury	1 ad.,1	M.McClellan#,F.Atwood
16	Orleans	1	C.Goodrich#
19	Ipswich,Newburyport	1,1	W.Petersen#,R.Forster#
Rough-legged Hawk:			
2,10	P.I.,Bridgewater	4,4	M&A Argue#,K.Anderson
17,27	Nantucket,Marshfield	1,1	R.Veit#,D.Brown#
Golden Eagle:			
8-9	Salisbury	1 ad.	N.Claflin,P.Butler,C.Wyman, R.Veit#
Bald Eagle:			
5-10,8-18	Brewster,Rowley-Newburyport	1 imm.,1 imm.	B.Chase & v.o.,D.Alexander & v.o.
Marsh Hawk:			
thr.	10 localities	14 individuals	v.o.
Gyrfalcon:			
1	Eastham(Marconi Station)	1	W.Bailey
Peregrine Falcon:			
8	Salisbury	1	H&M Bates#
Merlin:			
thr.	Sandwich	1	R.Pease
Bobwhite:			
thr.	Middleboro	100+	D.Briggs#
King Rail:			
23	Plymouth	1	W.Petersen#
Clapper Rail:			
15-28,18	Manomet,Marion	1,2	B.Sorrie,G.Mock,Jr.
Virginia Rail:			
2,9	Marshfield,Ipswich	2,1	BBC(W.Harrington),J.Berry
12-26,23	W.Roxbury,Plymouth	1,1	J.Pickup,W.Petersen
Common Gallinule:			
1	Harwich	1	B.Nikula
Killdeer:			
2 on	10 localities	28 individuals	v.o.
Black-bellied Plover:			
24	Chatham(North Beach)	15	R.Veit#
Common Snipe:			
2,9	Marshfield,Dartmouth	2,3	W.Harrington,R.O'Hara#
15,26	Bourne,W.Roxbury	12,5	B.Sorrie,J.Pickup
Red Knot:			
16	Revere	130+	W.Petersen#
Purple Sandpiper:			
16	Rockport	150	BBC(R&D Hale)
Sanderling:			
16	Revere	110	R.Emery#
Glaucous Gull:			
15-18,16	Gloucester,W.Roxbury	3,1	v.o.,W.Petersen
Iceland Gull:			
19	P.I.	46	W.Petersen#
Great Black-backed Gull:			
15	W.Roxbury	1000	F.Atwood
Herring Gull:			
15	W.Roxbury	15,500	F.Atwood
Common Gull:			
thr.	Newburyport	1 ad.	v.o.
Black-headed Gull:			
thr.	Newburyport,Squantum	1-2,max.7(Feb.17)	v.o.
1,18	Chatham,Orleans	2,2	W.Bailey & v.o.
Laughing Gull:			
27	Plymouth	1	D.Briggs#
Little Gull:			
thr.	Newburyport	1 ad.,2 imm.	v.o.

Black-legged Kittiwake:

17,18	Rockport,Eastham	1 imm.,4-5	S&J Harrison,W.Bailey

Razorbill:

16,17	Gloucester,Nantucket Sound	1,1	R.O'Hara,R.Veit

Black Guillemot:

thr.	Rockport	4	v.o.

Monk Parakeet: (Exotic Escape)

thr.	Haverhill	1	W.Drummond

Ring-necked Parakeet: (Exotic Escape)

23	Plymouth	1	SSBC(W.Petersen)

Barn Owl:

5	Cambridge	1(photographed)	G.Miller

Screech Owl:

2,25,27	Cambridge,Lincoln,S.Dartmouth	1,1,1	A.Horn,P.Swift,P.Regan

Great Horned Owl:

thr.,1,10	Milton,Danvers,Ipswich	1,1,1	H.D'Entremont,E.Pyburn#,J.Berry

Snowy Owl:

thr.	Newburyport Area	1	v.o.
15-19,17	Eastham,Squantum	1,1	W.Bailey,R.Pasquier#

Barred Owl:

thr.	Danvers	1	v.o.

Long-eared Owl:

2,23	Orleans	1	C.Goodrich,B.Nikula,Harris

Short-eared Owl:

thr.;8	Eastham;Newburyport	1;1	R.Forster#,R.Veit;N.Claflin
6&8	Squantum	1	E.Morrier

Saw-whet Owl:

thr.	P.I.	1	v.o.

Pileated Woodpecker:

3,11,19	Carlisle,Dover,Wayland	1,1,2	R.Thompson,F.Royce,J.Mansfield

Red-bellied Woodpecker:

3	S.Natick	1	H.Biggart

Red-headed Woodpecker:

thr.	Woburn,Littleton,Rockport	1,1,2	v.o.,fide J.Baird,v.o.

Horned Lark:

9,19	Dartmouth,Ipswich	125,75	R.O'Hara,W.Petersen#

Common Crow:

10,23	Bridgewater,Natick	707,1296	SSBC(Anderson),R.Forster

Fish Crow:

15	W.Roxbury(Dump)	185	F.Atwood

Boreal Chickadee:

thr.	P.I.	1	v.o.

Red-breasted Nuthatch:

thr.	11 localities	18 individuals	v.o.

Brown Creeper:

thr.	12 localities	14 individuals	v.o.

Winter Wren:

2,10	Middlesex Fells,Princeton	2,2	R.Stymeist,L.Milton
13	Manomet	1	P.Donahue

Carolina Wren:

thr.	10 localities	11 individuals	v.o.

Long-billed Marsh Wren:

1	Harwich	1	B.Nikula

Gray Catbird:

thr.,14	Lakeville,Middleboro	1,1	S.Erwin,E.Lemmo
15&19,23	Bourne,Plymouth	1,1	B.Sorrie,SSBC(W.Petersen)

Brown Thrasher:

thr.	S.Wellfleet(WBWS),Plymouth/4(Feb.15),3(b.)/W.Bailey,B.Sorrie		

Varied Thrush:

4-7	Billerica	1	E.Durgin,N.Smith

Hermit Thrush:

5,6,9	Milton,Manomet,Marion	singles	O.Kerr,M.B.O.,G.Mock,Jr.

Eastern Bluebird:

2,11	W.Yarmouth,Dorchester	3,1	P.Aiken,T.Long

Cedar Waxwing:

7,9	Framingham,Rockport	17,6	R.Forster,H.Bates

Northern Shrike:

thr.	8 localities	8 individuals	v.o.

Loggerhead Shrike:			
10,24	Wellfleet,Barnstable	1,1	C.Goodrich,R.Pease
Ovenbird:			
10-17	Sandwich	1	v.o.
Yellow-breasted Chat:			
2,2-6	Falmouth,Winchester	1,1	M.Wilson,Stevenson
Eastern Meadowlark:			
thr.,19	Bridgewater,Ipswich	40+,17	D.Briggs,W.Petersen#
Redwinged Blackbird:			
thr.,26	Abington,Sudbury	300,300	E.Pearson,R.Forster
Northern Oriole:			
thr.	7 localities	10 individuals	v.o.
Rusty Blackbird:			
thr.	Nantucket	18	R.Veit & S.Perkins
17,26	Westport Pt.,Hingham	1,5	BBC(T.Athearn),C.Clark
Common Grackle:			
26	Framingham	15	R.Forster
Brown-headed Cowbird:			
17	Westport	75	BBC(T.Athearn)
Dickcissel:			
thr.	7 localities	singles	v.o.
Evening Grosbeak:			
2,2-18	Byfield,Ipswich	50+,40+	T.Joyce,J.Berry
Purple Finch:			
2	Framingham	30	K.Hamilton
Pine Grosbeak:			
3,7	Weston,West Yarmouth	3,15	D.Dumaine,P.Aiken
Hoary Redpoll:			
9 on	Rockport(2 places)	1,1	R&D Hale
14	Vineyard Haven(M.V.)	1	M.Hancock# & A.Keith
16-20	Eastham	1	R.Clem & W.Bailey, v.o.
22-25,25	Mansfield,W.Yarmouth	3,2	A.Richardson,E.Matthewson
Common Redpoll:			
2 on	35 localities	1-50(tot.522)	v.o.
10,16,17	Plymouth,P.I.,Nantucket	50(b.),250+,95	B.Sorrie,H.Wiggin#,R.Veit#
22-25,23	Mansfield,Rockport	65,65	A.Richardson,L.Jodrey
Pine Siskin:			
thr.	14 localities	1-50(tot.171)	v.o.
thr.,9	W.Boxford,Falmouth	65,75	R.Chadwich,CCBC(Baines)
Red Crossbill:			
16 on,17	P.I.,Framingham	max.80(Feb.19),7	W.Drummond,R.Forster
2,17	Falmouth,Nantucket	5,120	M.Wilson,R.Veit#
White-winged Crossbill:			
thr.	17 localities	1-12(tot.70)	v.o.
thr.	P.I.	50+	v.o.
Seaside Sparrow:			
24	Eastham	1	R.Veit#
Tree Sparrow:			
thr.	Middleboro,W.Roxbury	150+,55	D.Briggs,F.Atwood
Field Sparrow:			
thr.,7	Beverly,Wellesley	max.5,9	G.Soucy,K.Hamilton
10,23	Newburyport,Plymouth	9,6	M.Poore,SSBC(W.Petersen)
White-crowned Sparrow:			
8,23	Cambridge,S.Dartmouth	1,1	A.Horn,P.Regan
Fox Sparrow:			
thr.	7 localities	8 individuals	v.o.
Lapland Longspur:			
2	Duxbury,P.I.	5,5	BBC(W.Harrington),R.Emery#
10,15-19	Dartmouth,Bourne	1,55	R.O'Hara#,B.Sorrie
Snow Bunting:			
9	Dartmouth;Salisbury,P.I.	5;3,2	R.O'Hara#;R.Stymeist#
15&19	Scusset Beach State Resvn.	26	B.Sorrie

ADDENDUM

Red-headed Woodpecker:			
Nov. 6	Mansfield	1 imm.	A.Richardson

Abbreviations

ad.	adult	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
b.	banded	GMNWR	Great Meadows Nat'l. Wildlife Refuge
f.	female	IRWS	Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary
imm.	immature	MBO	Manomet Bird Observatory Staff
m.	male	MNWS	Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary
max.	maximum	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
thr.	throughout	A.A.	Arnold Arboretum
unc.	uncommon	A.P.	Andrews Point
v.o.	various observers	E.P.	Eastern Point
yg.	young	F.H.	Fort Hill, Eastham
#	additional observers	F.M.	Fowl Meadow, Milton
CBC	Christmas Bird Count	Mt.A.	Mt. Auburn Cemetery
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	M.V.	Martha's Vineyard
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	P.I.	Plum Island
PBC	Paskamansett Bird Club	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable

Corrigendum

In the Bird Observer Summary for November, 1973, it was stated that the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper seen at Newburyport was a first state record. This was, in fact, the second state record, the first being a bird collected at Plymouth Beach, June 30, 1971.

DISASTER ON CAPE COD

The terns of Cape Cod completed a very unsuccessful nesting season during the summer of 1973, an indication that they are losing the battle against natural predators augmented by people, vehicles, and dogs. According to Ian Nisbet of Massachusetts Audubon Society, the tern colonies are not doing quite well enough to maintain their population.

The posting of the breeding colonies by MAS, National Seashore, and various conservation groups of Cape Cod has afforded some protection. However, manpower to thwart violators is inadequate. Furthermore, at night, the terns also have to contend with rats, Black-crowned Night Herons, and Great Horned Owls. Rats, in particular, disrupted the colony at Plymouth Beach, while at Grey's Beach, Yarmouth, a Great Horned Owl ate about 3,000 chicks.

The colonies at Grey's Beach and Great Island increased in mid-June due to the influx of displaced terns from Plymouth Beach. This late nesting, coupled with a heat wave in early July, killed a large percentage of half-grown birds.

The following is a summary of the colonies' successes and failures last summer, compiled from these sources: Ian Nisbet and James Loughlin of MAS, Lucian Rowell of Cape Cod Bird Club, Richard L. Cunningham of National Seashore, Erma J. Fisk, Charles Schmidt, and the Cape Naturalist, bulletin of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History.

Monomoy National Wilderness, Chatham (Nisbet)

Common Tern:	2,100 pairs	average 1.7 young per pair
Roseate Tern:	200-250 pairs	average 1 young per pair
Arctic Tern:	4 pairs	2 chicks found

Grey's Beach, Yarmouth (Nisbet)

Common Tern:	2,000 pairs	average 0.4 young per pair
Roseate Tern:	300-400 pairs	no data

Tern Island, Chatham (Nisbet)

Common Tern:	75 pairs	1 chick raised in July
Arctic Tern:	33 pairs	no chicks
Least Tern:	6 pairs	no data

Dennis (Nisbet, Fisk)

Common Tern:	20 pairs	no data
Least Tern:	85 pairs	no data

Great Island, Wellfleet (Rowell, Fisk)

Common Tern:	150-170 pairs	100 chicks banded

Pilgrim Heights Beach, Truro (Rowell, Fisk, Schmidt)

Common Tern:	2 pairs	no data
Roseate Tern:	4 pairs	no data
Least Tern:	150 pairs	successful, no complete data

Race Point Beach, Provincetown (Rowell, Fisk)

Common Tern	1 pairs	no data
Arctic Tern:	4 pairs	no data
Least Tern:	30 pairs	25 young

Coast Guard Beach, Eastham (Nisbet, Fisk, Loughlin, Cape Cod Bird Club)

Common Tern:	300 pairs(New Island)	50 young
	1 pairs(South end)	2 young banded
Roseate Tern:	10 pairs(New Island)	no data
Arctic Tern:	7 pairs(New Island)	1 young
	1-2 pairs(South end)	2 young banded
Least Tern:	25 pair (South end)	35 young banded

North Beach, (South of Nauset Inlet) (Fisk, Laughlin)

Common Tern:	10 pairs	no data
Arctic Tern:	2 pairs	no data
Least Tern:	50 pairs	no data

Harding's Beach, Chatham (Nisbet)

Least Tern:	120 pairs	"successful"

Craigville Beach (Loughlin)

Common Tern:	150 pairs	no data
Least Tern:	50 pairs	no data

Osterville (Loughlin)

Common Tern:	60-70 pairs	no young seen
Least Tern:	30 pairs	2 young seen

North Sandwich (Conservation Commission)

Common Tern:	19 flying young July 25
Least Tern	12 flying young July 25

A recent report by Deborah V. Howard of MAS identifies the unprecedented rat infestation at Plymouth Beach as primarily due to the mild and open winter of 1972-73 which aided rat survival. Secondary factors were Christmas trees placed on the beach to hold sand (also used as shelter by the rats) and garbage from local houses and visitors. Though MAS has maintained a rat-control program at Plymouth Beach, its efforts in 1973 were to no avail.

On the brighter side, Mrs. Howard states: "Monomoy Island off Chatham and Bird Island, Marion, produced bumper crops of tern chicks and a considerable number of youngsters survived at Yarmouth. Many of the smaller colonies also did well, probably because human disturbance was reduced to a minimum by careful posting and surveillance."

R. H. S.

CURLEW SANDPIPERS ON PLYMOUTH BEACH

As might be expected, another Curlew Sandpiper turned up on Plymouth Beach again this spring. Though I cannot speak with authority on the status of this species in Massachusetts in the past, my experience seems to indicate an increasing regularity in recent years. During the past four years there have been four sightings of Curlew Sandpiper on Plymouth Beach. In 1970 a partial breeding-plumage bird was present from June 8-15. In 1971 the species was not seen on Plymouth Beach, but in 1972 two individuals were recorded. The first of the season, another partial breeding-plumage bird, appeared on May 17. On June 11 the second bird, in full breeding plumage, turned up. Both of the 1972 birds were seen on one day only. In 1973, at about the expected date, another partial breeding plumage bird was seen, this one staying from May 30 to June 2.

Curlew Sandpipers seem to be so regular on Plymouth Beach that I am beginning to wonder about the possibility of the same bird returning each year. At least with the Ruff, it seems that some birds on the eastern coast of the United States have developed a kind of migration pattern, going with the native shorebirds north in the spring and south in the fall. Our banding data at Manomet Bird Observatory is beginning to suggest that the same shorebirds stop at Plymouth Beach each year. Possibly this is also true of Curlew Sandpipers. Maybe next year, when a Curlew Sandpiper turns up on Plymouth Beach, we will be able to net the bird and clamp a band on it to find out.

Paul K. Donahue
Manomet Bird Observatory

WHY GREAT BLUE HERONS TILT THEIR HEADS

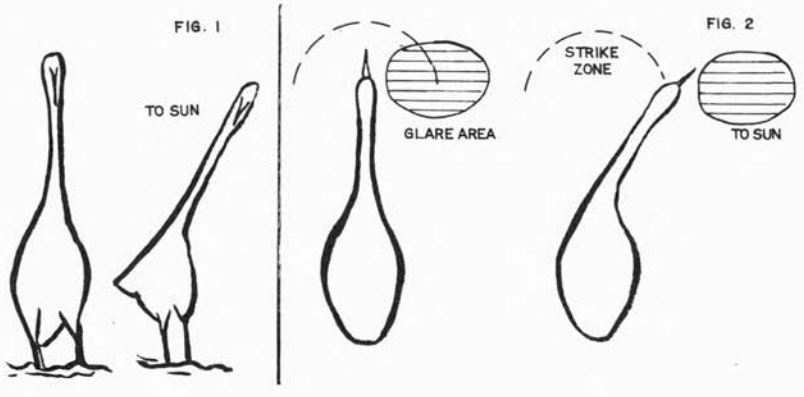
A bird that forages over water can increase its hunting efficiency by suppressing glare from the sun that might obscure its prey. Possible anatomical devices are dark patches around the eyes (as used by football players!), colored oil droplets in the retina, or polarizing filters. Behavioral actions include shadowing the water surface with a wing.

While hunting on a bright clear day, a Great Blue Heron often tilts its head and neck (Fig. 1) when it is not facing directly toward or away from the sun. On an overcast day, this behavior is much less frequent. J. R. Krebs and B. Partridge (University of British Columbia) suggest in Nature for April 20, 1973, that this action improves the bird's ability to see into the water.

For example, if you stand in a pond and face obliquely from the sun, a glare patch will persist near your sunward side. But by leaning toward the sun, the patch will shift farther away from the frontal direction. For the heron, this action increases its unobstructed strike zone (Fig. 2).

L.J.R.

Diagram adapted from Krebs and Partridge.



HAWKWATCH - CLOCKWATCH

During autumn migration, Accipiter hawks are most frequently seen during early morning, Buteo in mid-morning, and Falco in mid-afternoon. These conclusions were reached by Helmut C. Mueller and Daniel D. Berger from data gathered during four years from the western shore of Lake Michigan (The Auk, 90, 3, July, 1973). In all, 198 days of observation yielded 11,264 individuals, of which about a thousand were of other genera (Harriers, Eagles, and Vultures).

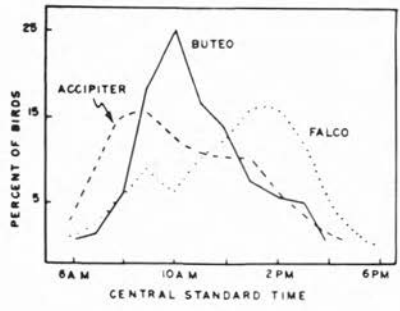
The Broad-winged Hawks were not included in this study because they occur in large flocks, and the sample available was strongly biased. Yet, the temporal pattern of this species is likely to be similar to the other buteos. The Marsh Hawk shows a peak in the early morning, while the Osprey migrates uniformly throughout the day.

The functional or adaptive significance of these diurnal variations in unclear, particularly with regard to the migrants' utilization of thermal updrafts. Are these conclusions by Mueller and Berger true of hawk migration in general or is the temporal pattern determined by local terrain or other factors? A simple count of genera by any birder could provide some interesting evidence.

L. J. R.

During an average autumn hawk migration, sightings of these three genera may show the daily rhythms indicated here. "Percent of Birds" refers to the total for each genus.

Adapted from Auk, July, 1973.



TOOL-USING BY BLUE JAYS

It is widely held that one manifestation of intelligence is the ability to improvise and use tools. In recent years scientists have discovered that animals other than man have this ability, and now our Northern Blue Jay has been added to this group, according to a report by Thony B. Jones and Alan C. Kamil in Science for June 8, 1973.

A laboratory-raised jay at the University of Massachusetts was observed to tear off strips of newspaper from the floor of its cage and use them to retrieve food pellets that were just beyond reach on a ledge outside of the cage. This behavior was self-acquired and not the result of training. Various other objects given to the jay were also used successfully.

The tool-using behavior increased significantly when the jay was subjected to food deprivation, showing it to be a real food-gathering response. There was also some enhancement of tool-use after the jay had been under 24-hour food deprivation, when the food pellets were not even present. Of nine hand-raised birds in the colony, six definitely exhibited tool-use, while two showed some ability. It appears that the function acquired by one individual had been learned or imitated by the other birds.

P.M.

A NOTE ON BREWER'S BLACKBIRD IN NEW ENGLAND

Wayne R. Petersen, Abington

The status of Brewer's Blackbird (Euphagus cyanocephalus) in New England is open to speculation. There is no existing specimen from any of the New England states, nor from the New York City region, as it is defined by John Bull (1964). Proctor and Sibley in their recent checklist (1973) relegate the Brewer's Blackbird to hypothetical rank, which means, "No specimen, no photograph, no valid sight record." Neither Forbush (1927), Griscom and Snyder (1955), nor Bailey (1955) even mention the Brewer's Blackbird in their annotated works on Massachusetts birdlife.

How, then, is it that since 1965, three New England states have sight records of Brewer's Blackbirds on Christmas Bird Counts? The first of these was a bird on the Saxtons River census in Vermont (1965), followed in 1966 by a bird on the Hartford, Connecticut, count. In 1968, three showed up on the Newport, Rhode Island, census. Since then, four additional records have appeared in the annual Christmas Bird Count editions of American Birds, published by the National Audubon Society. To these reports should be mentioned a small handful of poorly documented sightings in Massachusetts by inexperienced observers or of birds proved to be something other than Brewer's Blackbirds.

How to evaluate the winter records listed above poses a challenging, but unresolvable, question. Is the Brewer's Blackbird actually beginning to winter in very small numbers in New England, or are people just thinking that they see them? Earl Godfrey (1966) states that the Brewer's Blackbird is, "A recent arrival in eastern Ontario, it is extending its range eastward." If this is the case, it seems logical to suppose that a small percentage could show up in New England while en route to the southeastern United States, where substantial numbers now seem to winter in certain localities.

With this background, the following notes from my journal on 27 October, 1973, seem pertinent:

"At about 2:30 P.M. I was returning from the outer beach in East Orleans, near the North Beach parking area, when I noticed two blackbirds feeding near one of the trash disposal barrels at the edge of the parking area. I recognized them as not being typical of any of our local blackbirds and at once began to take a closer look. They were both alike in the following particulars:

1) Size was nearly the same as a Rusty Blackbird and the overall shape was very similar. The tail was medium in length and quite rounded in flight. There was no keel in the tail or notch in the end.

2) Bill was quite small, at least as small as in the Rusty Blackbird, and quite pointed. Very different from the massive bill of a Common Grackle.

3) Plumage was generally an overall dull grayish-brown with only a slight greenish highlight on the wings and tail. There was no trace of an eye line, nor any hint of rusty scaling on either the back or the breast. The smoky colored breast was very faintly and indistinctly vertically striped with blurred dark stripes. The iris was a dark brown with no trace of pale color.

4) The birds walked like Rustys, tails held down when walking and feeding, not up, like the Brown-headed Cowbird. They jetted their tails when alarmed.

5) The birds seemed very tame, as they so often are in the West, and they were readily approached to within 8'-12' as they walked about the parking lot picking up refuse or while they perched on a stone retaining wall.

6) Several times as they flew for short distances, they uttered a very characteristic "CHICK" note, more highly pitched than the corresponding note of the Rusty Blackbird or Common Grackle. It is a note that I have heard many times in the West."

These two birds were later seen by Wallace and Priscilla Bailey, Carl Goodrich and Blair Nikula. They were present briefly at the same location on the following morning.

The next weekend, November 4th, another similar-looking blackbird was well studied by Carl Goodrich and Winthrop Harrington at Truro, Massachusetts. The same (?) individual was still present on the 7th, seen by Richard Forster.

While both of these sightings can only be given a hypothetical rating, they nonetheless should help to put the serious field student on to the increasing (?) possibility of recording a bona fide Brewer's Blackbird in New England.

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SAW-WHET OWL AT PLUM IS.
JAMES HINDS, CONCORD

SCREECH OWL
STEWART YOUNG, NEEDHAM

BARN OWL
Gayle Miller, Cambridge

UNCOMMON MASSACHUSETTS SPARROWS

Richard A. Forster, Framingham

Sparrows as a group are unduly neglected by most bird watchers. They are not as easy to observe as waterfowl, shorebirds or gulls and not nearly as colorful to look at as spring warblers. But, for a curious few, they hold a certain attraction. I am much more likely to "check" every sparrow for something odd than scan incessantly through myriads of warblers during a spring wave. With these thoughts in mind, I would like to give you some hints on what some of the unusual sparrows are and when and where to look for them.

Among the numerous Sharp-tailed Sparrows in coastal salt marshes, a few Seaside Sparrows can be found. It is difficult to determine how many Seaside Sparrows breed in the state. The most likely areas to find them breeding are the vast salt marshes; i.e., Nauset, Westport-Dartmouth, Plum Island and perhaps the great marsh at Barnstable. Seaside Sparrows are inconspicuous, and only diligent search in the salt marshes is likely to yield a glimpse of one. During the breeding season they may be most readily found by listening for the song, which sounds quite similar to a Redwinged Blackbird. The Seaside Sparrow's song, however, is usually given at dusk or at night when few observers are afield. In very few instances, and never in Massachusetts, have I heard the song in the daytime.

A good time to observe Seaside Sparrows is in late summer. The area known as Plum Bush near the bridge to Plum Island, as well as the surrounding tidal creeks, are good places to look for them. Nauset Marsh on Cape Cod is another good spot for them. Perhaps the best chance of getting one here is during fall and early winter when an extremely high tide invariably pushes a few to the marshes' edge at Fort Hill, Eastham or below the old Coast Guard building (now Coast Guard Beach). As the winter progresses, it becomes increasingly difficult to find one. It is often necessary to get your feet wet to see one.

The Lincoln's Sparrow occurs regularly as a migrant in spring and fall. In my experience, it can be found from 12 May to the end of the month and from early September to the end of October. The chances of seeing one in spring are best at coastal land bird traps such as Plum Island, Nahant, Marblehead Neck and Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. They are inconspicuous, but can usually be found skulking in the shade of yews and other shrubs, especially in the area known as the Dry Dell in Mt. Auburn Cemetery. As the observer approaches, they dart into the shrubbery and reappear only when the observer departs. This behavior is generally the pattern in spring migration.

In the fall, the Lincoln's Sparrow is generally much more widespread than in the spring. Although it can be found in the usual coastal traps, it seems to be commoner inland at this season along streams with brushy edges or in dense thicket areas. From mid-September to mid-October, patient "squeaking" in these areas will usually produce one.

The Grasshopper Sparrow has a spotty breeding distribution in eastern Massachusetts. Rarely reported during spring migration, the Grasshopper Sparrow arrives on its breeding grounds about mid-May. The best area to find it is on Cape Cod and along the south-eastern coastal region. Here, they frequent vast fields with short junipers or young pines, which they use as singing perches.

The Grasshopper Sparrow is a remarkably regular fall migrant occurring from late September to late October. I have an unusual concentration of observations around October 20. During the fall, it is found in weedy fields and in the short grass next to roadsides. At this season, it is found inland as well as in coastal areas. There have been a number of recent winter records on Cape Cod.

The Henslow's Sparrow is one of the rarest and least known sparrows in Massachusetts. It is virtually unknown as a migrant, especially in spring. The only way one could possibly find one is to go to a known breeding area. Last year they were present at the Worcester Airport. This is the only breeding area I have heard of in eastern Massachusetts for the last decade. The Henslow's Sparrow has a history of showing up at a breeding site, remaining for a few years and then leaving, even though the habitat appears to remain unchenged.

A species which seems to have increased markedly in recent years is the Lark Sparrow. This sparrow has rather specific migratory habits, being rarely reported away from the coast and almost never seen in spring. Its period of occurrence in the fall is prolonged, with reports spanning the period from late July to early November. However, the most likely period to find one is from late August to mid-September, with chances decreasing through October. It prefers sandy areas along the coast, frequently in the vicinity of buildings. Salisbury, Plum Island and the Outer Cape are the best areas to search for Lark Sparrows.

Occasionally, immature Lark Sparrows are observed which retain a significant amount of the juvenal plumage. These birds have a brown, rather than chestnut, ear patch, varying amounts of streaking on the chest and along the sides of the breast, and overall, resemble a Vesper Sparrow. The most diagnostic characteristic of these immature birds is a rounded white-tipped tail, which will separate it from the Vesper Sparrow.

When searching along the coast for the Lark Sparrow, keep an eye open for the Clay-colored Sparrow. Both species prefer sandy areas with or without short grass. Although there is a handful of spring records, the Clay-color is principally a fall visitant in the state. Mid-September to late October is the time to look for this sparrow along the coast. Although there are few inland records, the number of recent wintering birds from inland areas indicates that it may be more regular inland in migration than supposed. It prefers weedy fields similar to that of the Field Sparrow. Undetected wintering birds may be the source of singing birds recorded in the spring.

A note of caution is advised when identifying a Clay-colored Sparrow. They bear a striking similarity to immature Chipping Sparrows, but are paler on the back, buffier on the chest and the facial markings are more clear-cut. In my experience, they are usually <u>not</u> found in flocks of Chipping Sparrows.

A bird which has recently been added to the State list and which has received much attention of late is the LeConte's Sparrow. I have no concrete proof, but would suspect the latter part of September and October as the months to look for it. It would probably occur coastally in damp or wet fields.

As with the Clay-colored Sparrow, this is a species which should be identified with extreme caution. The Grasshopper Sparrow resembles the LeConte's but generally lacks the <u>bold</u> but fine streaks on the sides and, in adult birds, the intense ochre color behind the eye. Inland races of the Sharp-tailed Sparrow migrate through Massachusetts in the fall. They can be confused with LeConte's, but they lack the pale crown stripe and have a darker back. To emphasize the caution warning, I note that a bird was reported as a LeConte's and photographed this last fall, only to reveal itself as a Grasshopper Sparrow.

I would also like to include two species which are not sparrows but share a close affinity with them - the Lark Bunting and the Dickcissel. Records of the Lark Bunting have increased tremendously in recent years, which could be tied in with a range extension of the species on the plains. The time to look for this bird is during the month of September, especially early September, with October records being much less frequent. As is invariably the case with many western stragglers, they prefer sandy patches along the coast. In fact, I have always seen them within sight of the ocean.

The Lark Bunting is larger than most sparrows and bears a superficial resemblance to a Purple Finch. It has a large, conical, bluish bill. The white wing patch is usually conspicuous when the bird is sitting. In flight, the Lark Bunting shows conspicuous white wing patches as well as white outer tail feathers.

The last of the discussion is the Dickcissel. Like most western species, this bird is seldom reported in the spring. In the fall, it is a widespread migrant both inland and coastally. Early stragglers appear in mid-August, but it is not until mid-September through October that the bulk of the migrants passes through. Dickcissels can be found inland in weedy fields and field edges, while along the coast they can be found almost anywhere. Dickcissels often linger until early winter, and a few spend the entire winter at bird feeders.

These hints may give you a better idea of when and where to find the more unusual sparrows. Good luck in your quest!

WHAT FUTURE FOR THE OSPREY?

Philip Martin, Antioch College, Ohio

Birders and conservationists have been greatly concerned in recent years over the fate of the Osprey (Pandion haliaetus). The populations of this elegant, crook-winged raptor have declined drastically since the late 1940's. Over the years there has been a high rate of reproductive failure which has been linked to contamination by the insecticide DDT and more recently to compounds known as PCB's (polychlorinated biphenyls), found in such familiar objects as styrofoam coffee cups and plastic bags. Other factors may have contributed to the decline also, a leading contender being depletion of the fish populations on which the Osprey is solely dependent for food.

Both PCB's and DDT are persistent chemicals -- they do not break down easily. Insecticides in the same group as DDT remain undecomposed in the environment from two to 20 years. DDT has a great affinity for the fatty tissue in animals. Ospreys, as all species at the top of food chains, are particularly susceptible to a build-up of DDT in their system. The poison is transferred from prey to predator all the way up the line until it finally reaches the Osprey, having "snow-balled" into greater and greater concentrations. DDT has been found to cause reproductive failure in birds, such as the formation of thin-shelled eggs which are too fragile to survive. It is thought that DDT disrupts the balance of enzymes and the hormone estrogen which controls the transfer of calcium from bone to eggshells.

Although DDT is no longer in widespread use, because of a ban by the Environmental Protection Agency, the persistent nature of the substance means that insecticides will continue to be potentially damaging for many years to come. In order to offset this threat, many schemes have been devised for increasing the Osprey's breeding success. Providing poles and structures for nesting sites, to lure the birds into relatively unpolluted areas where the birds enjoy a higher success rate, has been tried in Maryland with good success. (A project of this sort was attempted on a small scale in the late 1960's in the clean environment of Quabbin Reservoir in central Massachusetts, but unfortunately the "osprey-poles" on the Dana meadows lured no occupants.)

Other plans have included removing the first clutch of eggs from a pair living in a relatively clean environment, such as the Chesapeake Bay area, and placing them in an incubator. The eggs would then be brought to the nest of a barren pair of Ospreys to rear, either as pipping eggs or as fledglings. Meanwhile, the original producer of the clutch would lay another set of eggs and care for them, thus doubling the potential reproductive success. If this plan were successful, it could prove valuable in replenishing the ravaged New England Osprey colonies.

Massachusetts Ospreys declined by about 80 percent during the 60's, paralleling the decline in all the northeastern coastal states, from Maine to New Jersey. Our state has only one significant colony of Ospreys left, on the Westport River near Narragansett Bay. This colony once numbered as many as 120 pairs. By the 1950's it had declined to 60 pairs, and by 1973 to 14 pairs, about a 90 percent decrease. In spite of this low population level (a record low which was also reached in 1963 and 1964), breeding success in 1973 was surprisingly high. The 14 pairs fledged a total of 27 young for an average of 1.9 young per nest. In 1972, the 15 pairs produced only 11 fledglings, an average of only 0.7 young per nest. The 1973 level is well above the 1.2 fledglings per nest which biologists at the U.S. Migratory Bird Population Station[1] have determined is the minimum output required to keep the population stable.

Actually, there are Ospreys in our state with an even better track record. On Martha's Vineyard two pairs have produced six, seven and six young[2] in the last three years, respectively, for an average of three or more young per nest.

This kind of performance is one of the most encouraging signs anywhere in the country that the Osprey may "make it." One year's success does not make a trend, but it gives new hope for this year's breeding season.

Footnotes

1. see: Zimmerman, David R. "Man and Osprey: Strategies for Survival" National Parks and Conservation Magazine. Vol. 47, #1, January, 1973.

2. Massachusetts data courtesy of Massachusetts Audubon Society.

HAWK MIGRATION 1973

A fledgling project three years ago, the Northeastern Hawk Migration Study has steadily grown in participation, sophistication, and results. Project coordinators Donald Hopkins and Gerald Mersereau have recently published a summary of observations made on three weekends in 1973, April 20-22, September 15-16, and October 27-28.

The primary objective of this investigation is to define better the principal hawk migration routes through southern New England and eastern New York state. To do this, ground-based, airborne, and radar observations were utilized. An ancillary project this year was the establishment of closely-spaced ground sites to determine the maximum distance at which Broad-winged Hawks can be identified and to learn whether these birds migrate along a broad front or a narrow corridor.

ITEM: On September 15th, Lighthouse Point, Connecticut, yielded a third of the reported Sharp-shinned Hawks, Marsh Hawks, and Ospreys, as well as half of the American Kestrels. The authors suggest that coastal areas on Long Island Sound should be more completely surveyed in the future.

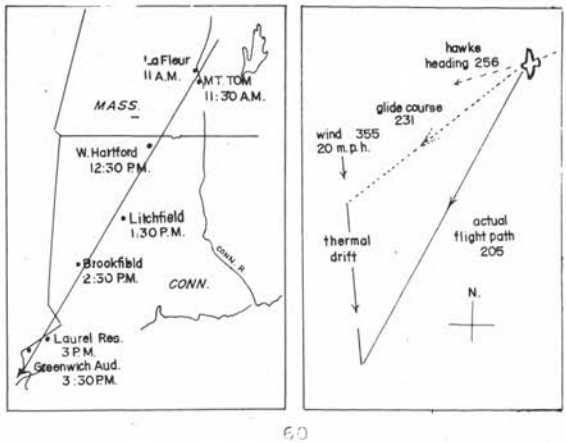
ITEM: Also on the 15th, a large flight of Broad-winged Hawks occurred during the morning. The map shows the birds' southwestward progress from Massachusetts, across Connecticut, and into New York State. In all, the hawks were observed for four hours during which they covered 94 miles at an average speed of 23.5 miles per hour. The plot indicates how this flight pattern came about. From an airplane, the birds were seen to glide from kettles at a heading of 256°. The report continues: "Taking a course of 231°, a kettle height of 800 feet, a thermal lift of 100 feet per minute, a glide angle of 25 to 1, and a wind direction of north at 20 miles per hour ...; this yields a course of 208° which is close to the 210° derived from the ground observations."

ITEM: During aeriel reconnaissance, the kettles tightened by a factor of four as the plane approached. The hawks that peeled off, usually from the top of the kettle, did so at a glide angle of less than four degrees.

ITEM: Seven close-site lookouts yielded mostly inconclusive data because of poor weather. However, it appears that in suitable terrain, Broad-winged Hawks can be distinguished at distances in excess of 1 1/2 miles by observers using binoculars. Putting this into perspective, a Broad-winged Hawk has a wingspread of three feet, which at a distance of 1 1/2 miles subtends an angle of 1.3 minutes of arc. Therefore, to an observer with seven-power binoculars, the wings appear to subtend nine minutes of arc, or about a third the diameter of the full moon as seen with the unaided eye. Of course, these numbers apply only if the bird is seen in full profile; that is, the wings are held perpendicularly to the line of sight. Mr. Hopkins believes that most hawks at a distance are first glimpsed while kettling. Hence, their profiles are foreshortened and their conspicuousness is lessened.

For 1974, hawk watch dates have been scheduled for April 20-21, September 14-15, and October 26-27. More information can be obtained from Mr. Donald Hopkins, 27 London Road., Windsor, Connecticut 06095.

L. J. R.



BIRDING BY TAPE RECORDER

Philip Martin, Yellow Springs, Ohio

Shortly before dawn on May 27th of 1972 I was standing beside a pond in Newburyport's common pastures. The rare and spectacular Purple Gallinule had been seen there only two days before, but now not a bird was in sight. Then I flipped on my portable tape recorder which broadcast the call of the Purple Gallinule over the pond. Almost immediately the bird rushed toward us, but upon approaching closely, it suddenly veered off and hid in the grass along the side of the pond. This particularly shy individual was not seen again.

Luring birds by imitating their calls is an art long practiced by hunters and more recently by bird enthusiasts, who spend long hours trying to hoot like a Barred Owl or whistle like a Screech. However, humans are not equipped to make all the sounds birds produce, and this is where portable tape recorders enter the picture.

"Tape birding" is most successful on the breeding grounds, where song is strongly related to the establishment of territory. The song of a male bird defending his territory, which is staked out just prior to breeding, is distinct from the alarm notes, flocking calls, and other bird sounds. This song is a warning to other males of the species to keep away. The song of another male inside this territory will bring the occupant rushing to drive away the intruder; a tape recorder playing the song will elicit the same response.

The way to begin tape-birding is to record a bird's call from one of the commercially available albums. The recordings prepared by the Cornell University Laboratory of Ornithology, to accompany the Peterson field guides, are good because they include a high percentage of native species. Yet, other recordings may have longer series of individual species' calls and songs.

Choose a bird and record its voice over and over, without narration and with about 10 seconds between calls, until you have roughly five minutes of uninterrupted avian vocalization. This process can be very tedious, but a long series of calls will reduce bothersome rewinding in the field. A "patch cord" that connects the phonograph directly to the tape recorder, excluding outside noise, is very helpful.

What birds should you record? Any bird that you've heard but have had a hard time seeing is worth a try. Owls are popular subjects for tape-birding, since their nocturnal habits make them especially elusive. The Screech Owl total on one western Massachusetts Christmas Count rose from seven in one year to 16 the next, because one intrepid soul got up at 2 a.m. and drove around back roads playing a tape, rousing 13 of the owls. He silenced the incredulous by calling in another bird just outside of the compiler's house! Screech Owl calls are doubly valuable, since they can be played during the day at any time of year to arouse small birds that tend to scold owls. Sometimes you will get no response, but if you hit it right, the resultant mob of birds can be astonishing! Barred Owls can also be called in with a tape, but I have had little experience and no success with Great Horneds, Long-eareds, and Saw-whets, although presumably they could be attracted too.

Tape recordings are marvelous for bringing the shy marsh-dwelling rails out into the open. If you carry a tape recorder to places such as Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Concord or the Lynnfield Marshes, you will most likely be rewarded with excellent looks at Virginia Rails and Soras. The month of May is best, as is the early morning, although good results may be obtained later in the day, especially if it's cloudy. I am always delighted to see the rails picking their way through the grasses, approaching cautiously but determinedly until they are only a few feet away. They will often stop, peer about, and with their whole body quivering, answer the tape with a surprisingly loud call.

As I have said, tape-birding works best with breeding birds on their territory. Hence, during the nesting season, it might be worthwhile to carry tapes of the various "specialty" birds in the areas you visit. These tapes could include Louisiana Waterthrush, and Yellow-throated Vireo at Crooked Pond, Boxford; Carolina Wren, Hooded Warbler, and White-eyed Vireo, in the Westport area; and Mourning Warbler, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and Pileated Woodpecker at Mt. Greylock in the Berkshires.

However, the possibilities do not end there. A recent issue of American Birds contained the intriguing fact that a New Hampshire enthusiast successfully called in Connecticut Warblers by tape during fall migration. Why did those non-territorial birds respond in the same manner as the Gallinule? Perhaps ornithologists can use tapes to establish the

size of an individual bird's territory by determining how far it will range to defend its domain. Although we have ample evidence of the decline of the diurnal raptors, population information on owls is lacking. Perhaps census routes could be established. Observers might use the same technique as in the Christmas Count, recording the number of owls heard or seen year after year.

I must admit to a vague uneasiness over the use of modern hardware to exploit birds' natural instincts. In a way, it is almost as unsporting as hunting polar bears from a helicopter. Indeed, I have heard speculation that repeated exposure to taped calls, such as is endured by Louisiana Waterthrushes at Crooked Pond, may cause disruption of their nesting cycle. I hope this is not the case, for I would have to give up tape-birding. In fact, I wish to explore further this aspect of birding, which has given me so much pleasure and probably has even further potential.

MASSACHUSETTS BREEDING BIRD ATLAS
1974-1978

This year, Massachusetts Audubon and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Game have launched a five-year program to map the breeding distribution of each bird nesting within the Commonwealth. The program is modelled on one that was successfully completed in Great Britain in 1972 and will rely on volunteer naturalists and outdoors people to gather the data. Each participant will be assigned a certain 10-square-mile "block" for coverage -- where possible, a "block" in which he lives or works. The total amount of time that each observer must commit is difficult to estimate, but 20-30 hours of observation should suffice to confirm all of the "easier" species. Although we would prefer to have the same participant(s) continue to cover a "block" for the entire five-year period, one of the advantages of this project is that one observer can take over for another without difficulty.

This project will provide the first complete set of detailed maps of breeding distribution available for any state. We are convinced that it will be extremely useful to those preparing statements on the effects of proposed land uses in the Commonwealth, and the Atlas should be an invaluable document enabling us to study more precisely those factors affecting a species' distribution.

For further information or instructions, write or call:

Deborah V. Howard
Massachusetts Audubon Society
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