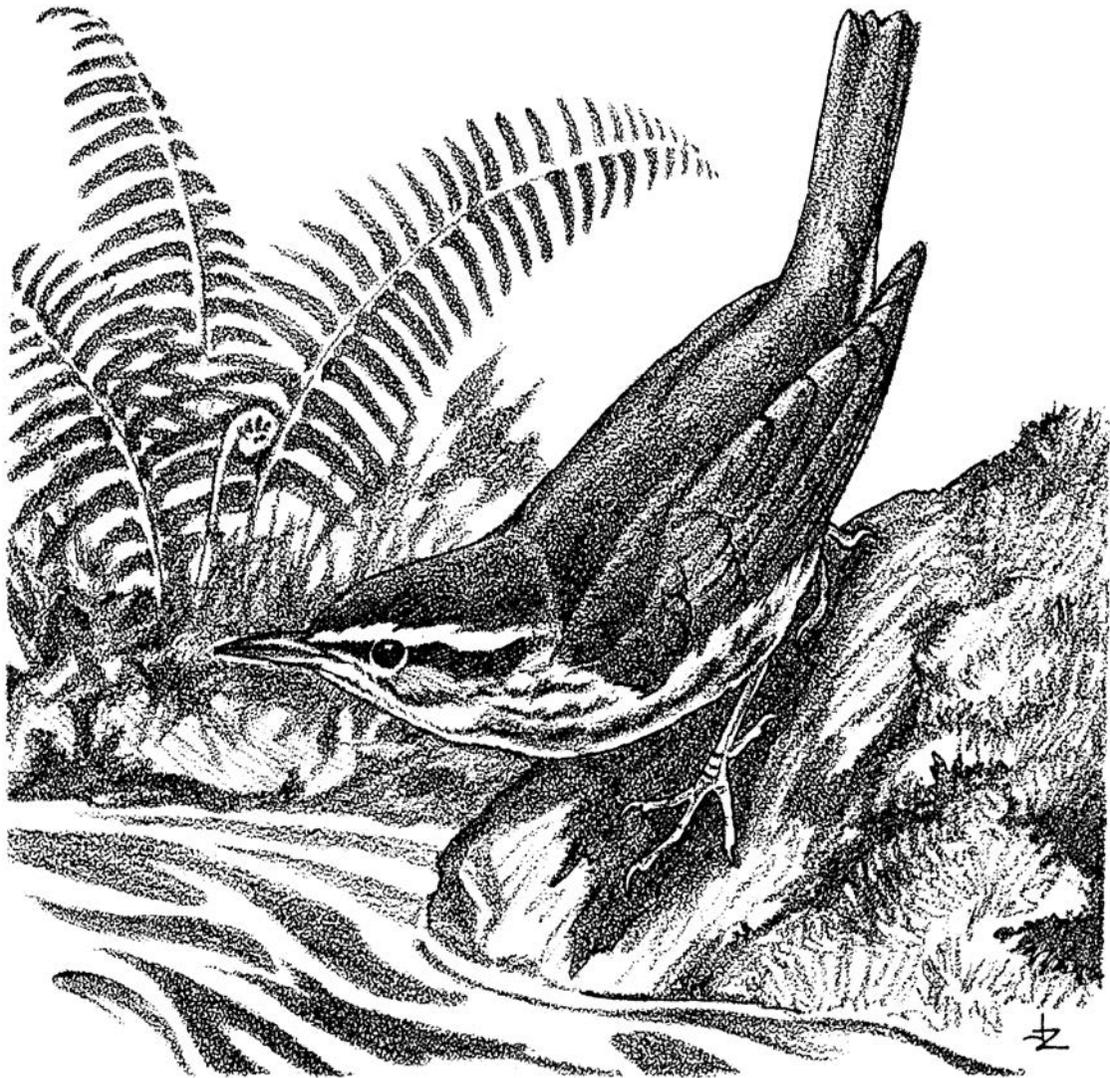


Bird Observer

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 3

JUNE 2003



HOT BIRDS



Discovered by David Ranney, this **Say's Phoebe** delighted many birders in Bedford, MA, during its brief stay. Frank Gardner took this image on May 18, 2003.

This **White Ibis** was discovered by a South Shore Bird Club group at Allen's Pond Mass Audubon Sanctuary in South Dartmouth on April 27, 2003. Mark Barriger took this digiscoped image of the bird on May 1.



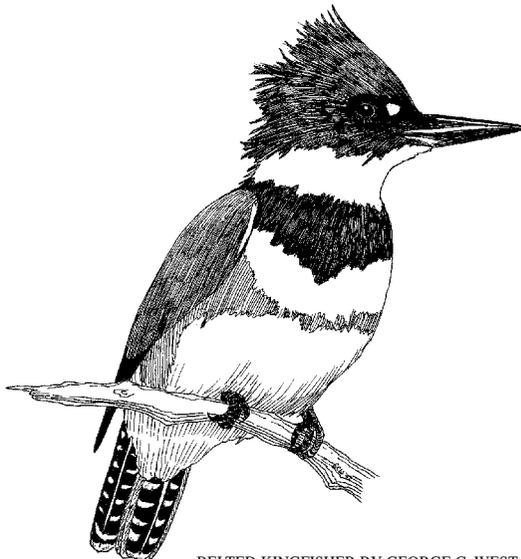
Erratum: The caption of this photograph on page 81 of the April 2003 issue (Vol. 31, No. 2) should have read "Couch's Kingbird by Denny Abbott." We especially regret the error on such a MEGA-hot bird (first state record for Massachusetts)!

Do you have a photograph or digital image of a Hot Bird?

We define Hot Birds as birds unusual to southern New England (usually Massachusetts) either by species or date or numbers. If you have a current avian rarity or phenomenon to share with us, get in touch with David Larson at dlarson@massaudubon.org or 978-462-9998.

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BELTED KINGFISHER BY GEORGE C. WEST



Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal — to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds
VOL. 31, NO. 3 JUNE 2003

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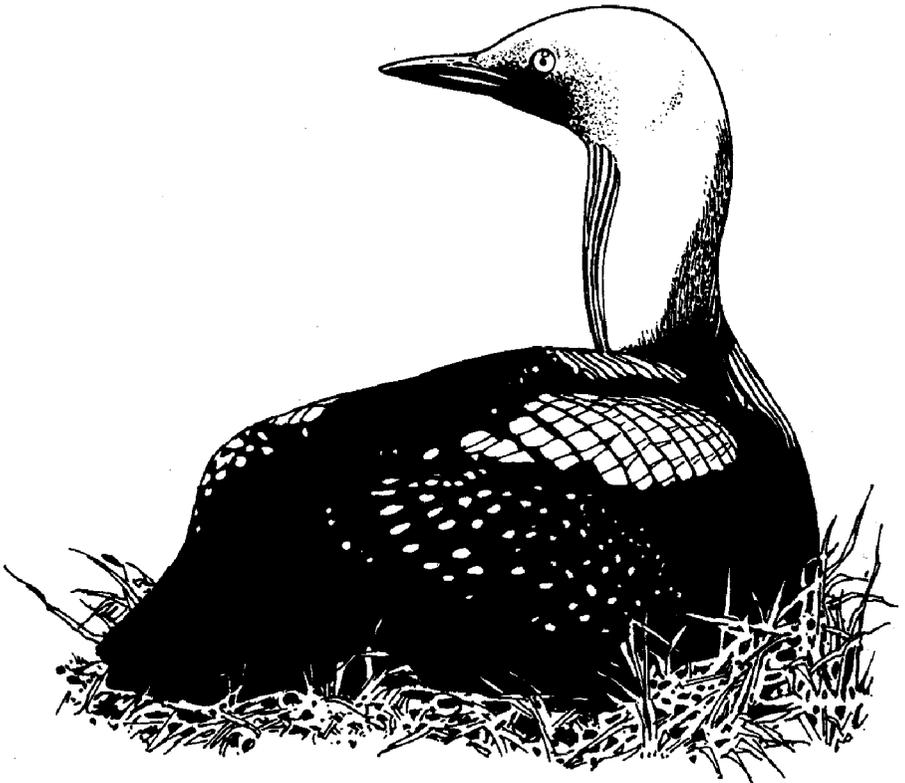
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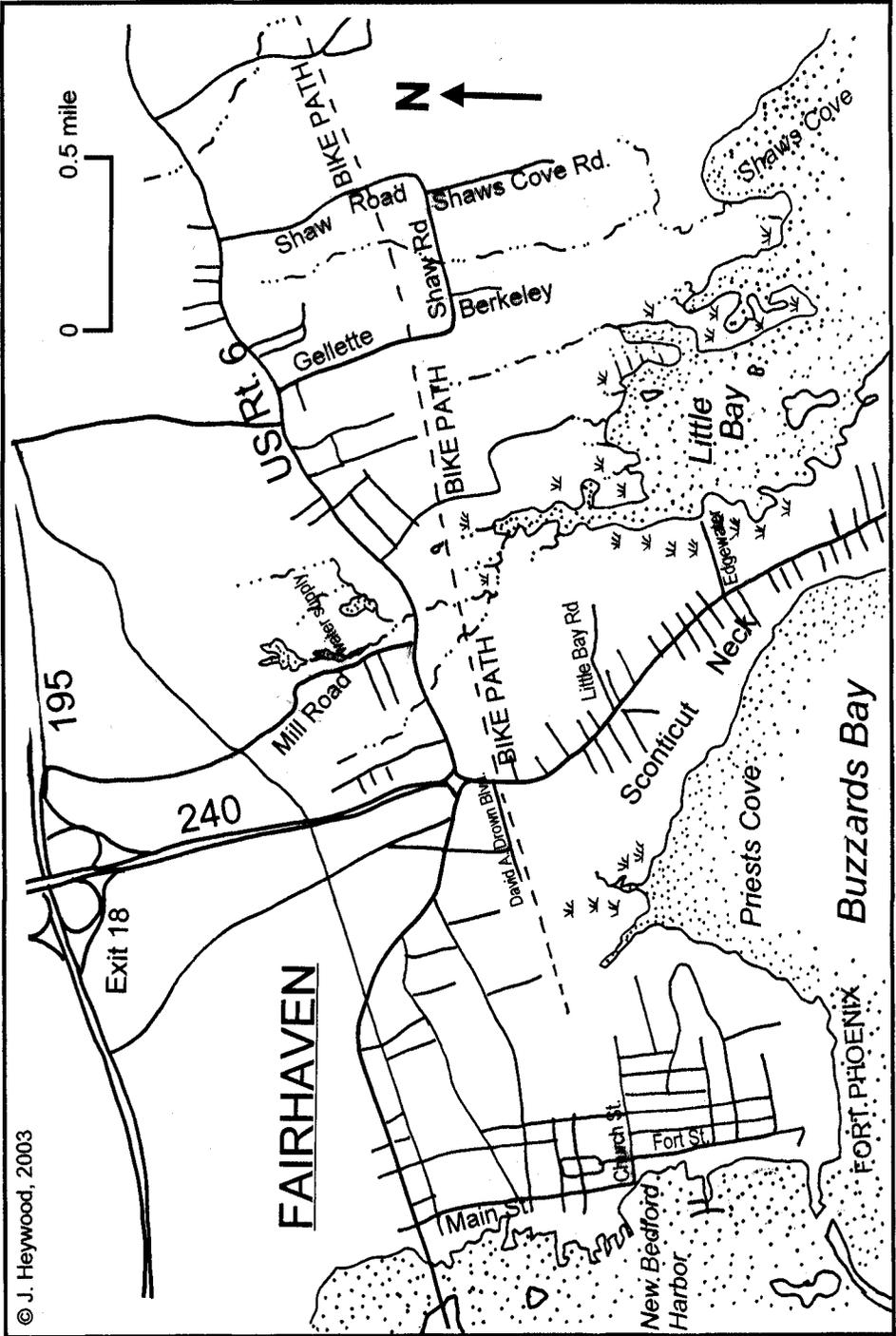
Editorial

One of the quieter joys of editing derives from the necessity of reasoning through apparent inconsistencies in submitted texts. For this current issue, several of us were presented with just this problem while analyzing the history of bird records in New England. What we learned is that, before the 1957 AOU Checklist, many subspecies were given proper English names. Moreover, these names were the ones actually used in the records. Most readers will think of “Pacific Loon” as the name of a recently-split species, a name that would not have occurred in earlier literature. Not so. From 1938 to 1957 that was the name regularly used in the records, but as the proper English name of a subspecies.

Terry Leverich



PACIFIC LOON BY ANON.



© J. Heywood, 2003

Coastal Birding in Fairhaven, MA

Michael Boucher and Dan Zimmerlin

Birding Fairhaven has grown in popularity over the past few years because of the preservation of important tracts of land and the increase of birders coming to this area to view rarities. This article's primary focus will cover coastal locations and farmland south of U.S. Route 6. Although there are many great areas in Fairhaven to bird, including the upper reaches of the Acushnet River and Riverside Cemetery, we have described an itinerary that can be covered in one day.

Shaw Road Area

From Interstate 195 take Exit 18, which is Route 240. Head south to the second set of lights, and take a left onto Route 6. Travel east for 1.3 miles, and take a right onto Gelllette Road. After about half a mile the residential neighborhood quickly gives way to farmland and open fields. Immediately to your left, you will see high-tension lines that parallel a bike path; the wires and poles should be searched for raptors at any time of year. During the fall, Canada Geese frequent the field on your left, and we have found as many as four Greater White-fronted Geese feeding with them on the remaining corn harvest. All the cornfields in this area should be checked for these northern rarities during fall and winter. From this point Gelllette Road takes a sharp left and turns into Shaw Road. The cornfield on your right can be a good spot for Eastern Meadowlarks in winter. Just past the cornfield you will see Berkley Road on your right. The field to the east is patrolled by birds of prey in fall and winter, including Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, and Short-eared Owl. American Kestrels can often be seen on the telephone lines bordering the west side of the field.

Just past the field on the right is a thicket with a stream running through it. Gray Catbirds are present year-round. During late fall and winter you might find a Yellow-breasted Chat or a Winter Wren, which can be brought out into the open by imitating a screech owl. The field to the east of this thicket is home to nesting Red-winged Blackbirds. Bobolinks have been seen flying over this grassy meadow in late spring, while American Woodcocks can be seen at dusk performing their nuptial flights.

The next right is Shaws Cove Road. The large weedy cornfield on the left has been very productive over the years. On at least two occasions we have found as many as three



FLOODED FIELD ON SHAWS COVE ROAD BY MICHAEL BOUCHER

Sandhill Cranes during late fall and winter. Also seen at this time of year are Rough-legged Hawks, Canada Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, Horned Larks, American Pipits, and Eastern Meadowlarks; the last can be heard singing on mild, calm mornings. During March be sure to check the flooded sections of this field for Wilson's Snipe and Killdeer. In spring migration many shorebirds can be seen, including Greater and Lesser yellowlegs, and Pectoral, Least, and Semipalmated sandpipers. In November 2002 we saw a Hudsonian Godwit and a White-rumped Sandpiper feeding in the same flooded field a couple of days after a strong nor'easter. Duck species can include American Wigeon, Blue- and Green-winged teal, and Wood Duck.



HUDSONIAN GODWIT ON SHAWS COVE ROAD BY MICHAEL BOUCHER

Toward the end of Shaws Cove there is a cow barn with silos. The people who run the farm request that you park on the side of the road before the barn and when leaving turn around at this point so as not to interfere with the milking operation. The cows go from one barn to another right next to the road, and vehicle traffic might spook them. During the winter there is a large mound

of silage next to the road. It attracts a number of birds including Song, Savannah, White-crowned, and Vesper sparrows. American Pipits and Palm Warblers also make appearances in late fall and winter. American Kestrels and Merlins have been seen feeding on mice that ventured out onto the pile for a quick bite, only to become a meal themselves. There is a thicket that runs the length of the road on the east side, another good place to look for sparrows and Northern Shrikes in winter.

Head back on Shaws Cove, take a right onto Shaw Road, and then a quick left. (It is still Shaw Road after it turns left.) Just past the house on your right, be sure to check the thickets along the road for sparrows in fall and winter. Eastern Bluebirds and Cedar Waxwings have been seen feeding on multiflora rose hips.

Fairhaven Soccer Fields

Continue north on Shaw Road until you come to Route 6 again. Take a left and travel west for 1.3 miles. Take a right just past the sign for Lifestyle Plaza. This short road will take you to the right of the plaza. You can park on the left side and walk north down a short road to some soccer fields. The Fairhaven soccer fields have been a productive spot for birding, and, besides the open grasslands, they also contain a stream, two ponds, and an area of thickets. These fields are known for their flocks of Canada Geese in the fall, which sometimes contain Greater White-fronted Geese. The open fields are also good for raptors, including Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Cooper's, and Sharp-shinned hawks.

Since the fields are private property, please park outside the gate, and stay off the fields themselves. You can walk into the parking lot and view most, if not all, of the fields from there. Two of the most productive areas are the thicket on either side of the gate and the stream that runs through it. During the winter, there is often open water to attract birds such as Rusty Blackbirds, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Winter Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, and Eastern Towhees.

As you walk in, you will notice a pond on the right. In spring and summer it might harbor Great Blue Herons, Black-crowned Night-Herons, and Belted Kingfishers. The trees around the pond are good for nesting Yellow Warblers. At the back of the interior parking lot (which is open only for soccer games), there is a hedgerow with cornfields behind it. In fall and winter numerous sparrow species, such as White-crowned, Savannah, Field, American Tree, Swamp, Song, and White-throated, can be seen feeding along the weedy edges of the fields close to the thickets. Partially hidden near the left end of the hedgerow is a smaller pond, which is best viewed from the cornfields. Wood Ducks have been seen here along with Green Herons.

Mill Road Waterworks

When you are finished, turn right onto Route 6, drive 0.2 mile west, and take a right onto Mill Road. Travel north on this road for about half a mile, and you will see a wide stream on your right that flows from the Fairhaven water supply. Ducks can be found here at almost any time of year, and the occasional Belted Kingfisher can be seen hovering over the water looking for a meal. Just past this area on the right is a building with a pond behind it, a good spot for ducks in fall migration. This is yet another spot to look for Greater White-fronted Geese mixed in with flocks of Canadas. The stream that flows out of the pond is another good place for spring migrants, and for the last two years has been home to a pair of Warbling Vireos. Baltimore Orioles and Eastern Kingbirds nest in and around this park-like setting. This is the public water supply for the town of Fairhaven; do not trespass beyond the pond.

Fairhaven Bike Path

Turn back, take a right onto Route 6, and travel west for half a mile. Turn left onto Sconticut Neck Road, and take your first right onto David A. Drown Boulevard. At the end of this street are a couple of parking spaces, but if they are filled, you can park at the Carousel Skating Rink. You will see a bike path, which is the same path that runs through the Shaw Road area. We have recently found that this bike path can harbor a number of good birds at any time; walking the path to the west seems to be the most productive. During the last few Christmas Bird Counts, this area has provided high totals of species such as Hermit Thrush, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, Eastern Towhee, and Yellow-breasted Chat. Toward the end of the bike path at Egypt Lane, nesting species include White-eyed Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, and Willow Flycatcher. During a good spring fallout a wide variety of passerines can be found along this path.

Edgewater Drive

When you are finished here, turn back, and take a right onto Sconticut Neck Road. Travel south for 0.9 mile, and take a left onto Edgewater Drive. After the first few houses you will see woods to the left and thickets on the right that border the road. This is a good area to look for spring and fall migrants. Just past this area the woods end, and a salt marsh can be seen on either side of the road. At extreme high tides this road will be covered with water. During the late spring, summer, and fall, Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows, Willets, Whimbrels, and Black-bellied Plovers can be seen on the marsh. Mosquito ditches run through here, and at low tide many other shorebirds can be found in migration. Yellow-crowned Night-Herons have shown up on a few occasions.

There is an expansive view to the north, east, and south of more salt marshes. This area can be productive at any time of the year. One of the first shorebirds to show up during spring migration is the American Oystercatcher. They have nested in this area for several years. They can be seen along the eastern shoreline as you look across the water of Little Bay. Late spring and summer bring many types of shorebirds. Terns such as Least, Common, and Roseate can be seen feeding close to shore next to the boat ramp, and Forster's Terns show up later in the season. Herons and egrets abound in the summer. At twilight Black-crowned Night-Herons can be seen flying into the mosquito ditches to feed on fiddler crabs, while Clapper Rails have been heard in the past calling across the marsh. Canada Geese and a host of duck species can also be seen in this sheltered cove. We have seen Sandhill Cranes on the opposite marsh on two occasions, and Bald Eagles have been known to show up in winter. There is a boat ramp allowing easy access to Little Bay; many people canoe and kayak from this location. Much of the shoreline is inaccessible except by this mode of transportation.

Winsegansett Heights

Head back, and take a left onto Sconticut Neck Road, traveling south for 2.3 miles. Turn right on Winsegansett Street, and drive for half a mile. Here is a tidal creek that runs under the road where American Bitterns and Black-crowned Night-Herons have been seen. Continue a short distance, and take a right onto Wamsutta Street, and then a left onto Murry Street. At the end of this street is a small parking area limited to two cars. On your right is Winsegansett Pond with salt marshes and shoreline. The east side of this tidal pond and uplands were recently purchased by the town of Fairhaven and will eventually be open to passive recreation, affording another view of the area.

The advantage of this spot is quick access to shorebirds and other waterbirds. During migration birds can congregate in Winsegansett Pond in great numbers, and low tide is the best time to visit. Check the tide charts for New Bedford harbor, and plan your trip accordingly. From the road, head north on the path that separates the harbor from the barrier beach. To the right is a section of marsh with exposed flats at low tide. This is a good spot for Semipalmated, Least, and White-rumped sandpipers, from mid-May until early September – even in the month of June, when shorebirds

are hard to come by. During late fall and early winter Killdeer can be found here and an occasional Greater Yellowlegs. The shoreline to the left is quite rocky, with the upper reaches consisting of sand and brush. Piping Plovers and Least Terns have nested along the beach. At low tide shorebirds such as Dunlins, Ruddy Turnstones, and Black-bellied Plovers can be seen year-round. In late summer Common, Least, and Roseate terns can be seen feeding and resting at the western tip of the beach. American Oystercatchers have been seen at the northeastern tip.

Fall and winter bring Brant and a host of sea ducks within easy viewing distance. Bonaparte's Gulls can be seen feeding out in the harbor; be sure to check the shoreline for possible Iceland, Glaucous, and Lesser Black-backed gulls mixed in with the regular lot. Along the beach look for Savannah Sparrows, American Pipits, Horned Larks, and Snow Buntings. On the other side of the beach there is a much larger tidal flat, which can be teeming with shorebirds and wading birds during the summer months. All the shorebirds previously mentioned for this area have been seen on these flats along with Short-billed Dowitcher, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Spotted, Pectoral, and Stilt sandpipers. Egrets and herons forage side by side with the shorebirds, and once we found a Tricolored Heron.

Wilbur Point

When you have finished birding this area, go back, and take a right onto Sconticut Neck Road (which turns into Wilbur Avenue at Goulart Memorial Drive), and travel south for half a mile. At this point take a right onto Potter Street, and be sure to check the thickets on either side of the road for sparrows and possibly a Yellow-breasted Chat in fall and winter. At the end of the street turn left onto Saltmarsh Road, and pull to the left at the end. There will be a break in the phragmites that affords a good view of the northern end of a 3 1/2-acre tidal pond. Species seen over the years include American Wigeon, Eurasian Wigeon, Gadwall, Blue- and Green-winged teal, and Pied-billed Grebe. Shorebirds abound at low tide in the summer, along with terns, egrets, and herons. Marsh Wrens and Common Yellowthroats can be heard singing throughout the summer months. On rare occasions one might see an American Bittern or Black Skimmer. Retrace your steps, and take a right onto Wilbur Avenue, keeping an eye to your right for more views of the pond.

Continue south on Wilbur Avenue all the way to the end. There are homes on stilts here, and past them are rock outcrops just offshore called Angelica Island. During the winter months Purple Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstones, and numerous sea ducks can be seen on and around the rocks. Summer brings nesting Double-crested Cormorants and Great Black-backed Gulls. Black Terns have been seen in late summer.

West Island Area

Head back north on Wilbur Avenue for 0.7 mile, and take a right onto Goulart Memorial Drive. As you drive down this road, look left where it opens up to give great views of marshes and estuaries. In late summer egrets and herons fly to roost toward evening at Round Island and can be seen foraging along the shoreline during

the day. On your right is a beautiful view of Buzzards Bay. Shorebirds can be seen working the wrack line, while terns dive for fish close to the road.

A short distance past the causeway, take your first right onto Alder Street, which shortly merges with Balsam Road. Follow Balsam Road for 0.7 mile, where it turns left and becomes Bass Creek Road. Turn right after the two houses on stilts. There are so many spots to view sea ducks and shorebirds in this area that you might get tired of



PIPING PLOVER NEST BY MICHAEL BOUCHER

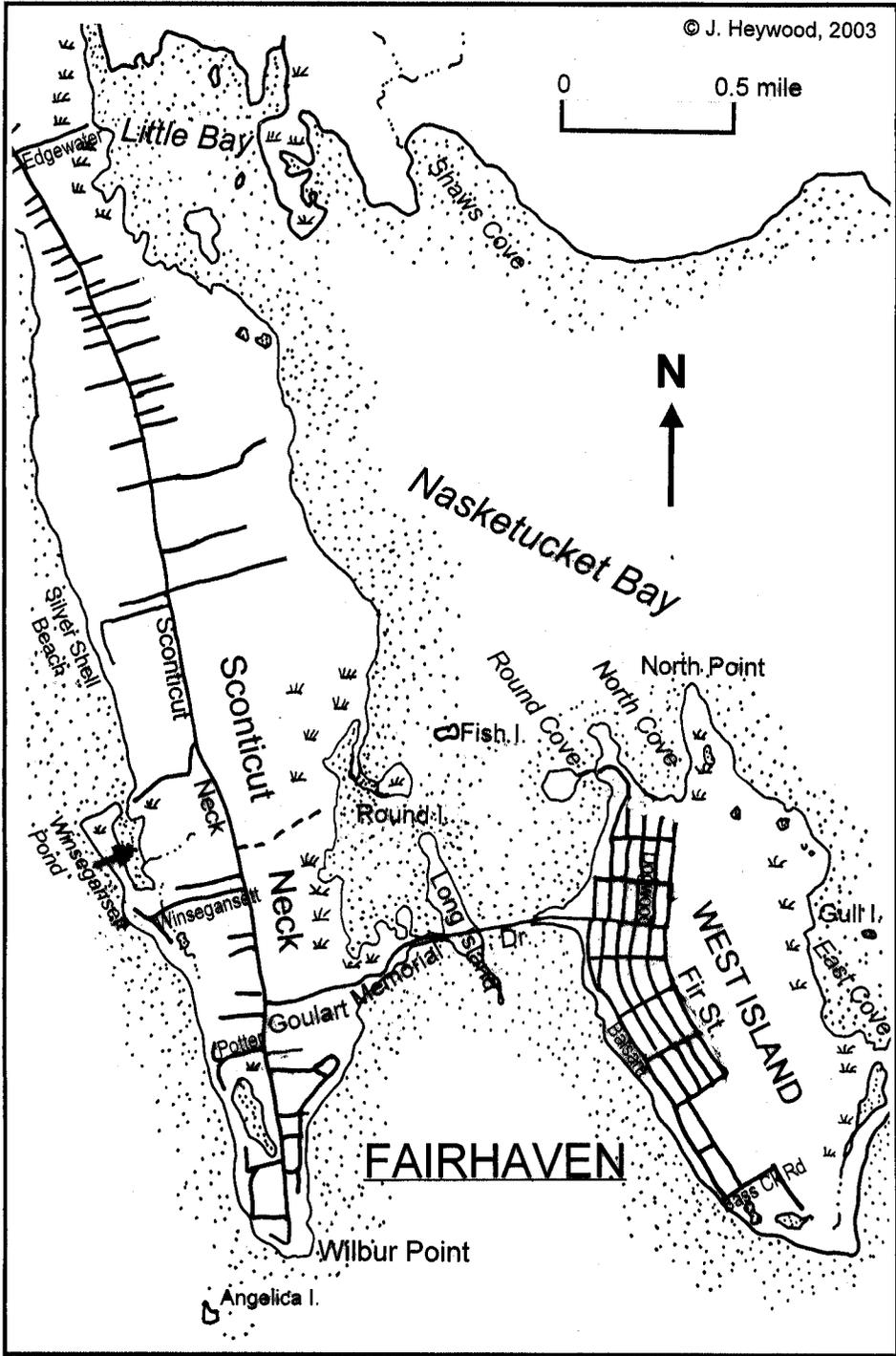
looking at them. Well, if you are like the two of us, no amount of birding will tire you out. This location is mentioned because of its great concentration of shorebirds feeding along the rocky shore at low tide. From late winter until early fall any resident or migrating shorebird can be found here. Looking south along the shoreline from the house on your left to the point will afford good views. Many sea ducks are present

throughout the winter, including all three scoters, Common Eiders, and on rare occasions a Barrow's Goldeneye. Northern Rough-winged Swallows have been seen in summer and might nest nearby in the seawalls.

Continue northeast on Bass Creek Road, keeping an eye on the roadway thickets for resident and migrant passerines. Turn right on Fir Street, and shortly you will see the parking lot for West Island Beach. It is open year-round, but from late June until Labor Day there is a charge to park here. You will see a tower, which was used during World War II for observing German U-boats. It is now home to Rock Doves, but fall migration can bring Merlins or Peregrine Falcons, which perch on top to survey the area for an easy meal. The winter months might reward you with a Snowy Owl as well as Snow Buntings, Horned Larks, and "Ipswich" Sparrows. Short-eared Owls occur in every season but summer.

This is another great area for shorebirds and sea ducks. Piping Plovers nest along the east-facing shoreline. During high tide the southwest-facing shoreline is a great place to view resting shorebirds along the wrack line from a fairly close distance. From the east side you can see in the distance Bird Island off the coast of Marion. This island hosts one of the largest breeding colonies of Roseate Terns in the Atlantic, and they can be seen feeding right off the beach in summer along with Least and Common terns. Winter brings Common and Red-throated loons, all three scoter species, Long-tailed Ducks, Northern Gannets, and, on rare occasions, Razorbills.

Head back the way you came, take a right onto Goulart Memorial Drive, and then take your fourth left onto Dogwood Street. Travel down this street for 0.3 mile, and when the road abruptly turns left, you will see an area on the right where you can



park. This will give you a great view of North Cove. Facing north, you will see a peninsula that juts out into Nasketucket Bay called North Point. Over the last few years American Oystercatchers have successfully bred on this point. In late spring scan the shoreline between the wrack line and upper beach for the oystercatchers, as they sit on or attend their nest. To your right is a marshy area with mud flats, a good spot for shorebirds and egrets in summer. The bay itself is home to ducks for most of the year. As you continue down the road, salt marshes border it on either side, and you can get out of your car again at this point and look for Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows and Willets. Turn around, turn left onto Goulart Memorial Drive, and take your second left onto Fir Street. On the right look for a sign for West Island Reserve.

West Island Reserve

We are very fortunate that a number of people banded together 15 years ago in an effort to save this pristine 338-acre habitat from development. It is composed of sandy shores, salt marshes, brackish ponds, mud flats, rocky headlands, forests, and wetlands. There are 160 acres of maritime hardwood forest, mainly composed of black oak and white oak, with red maple and tupelo growing in wetter areas. There are numerous paths that crisscross the property with beautiful views of Nasketucket Bay. Birding is at its best during spring and fall migration. The summer can be productive for shorebirds and marsh-dwelling species.

Early mornings in late spring, with favorable southwest winds, can bring a surprising number of passerines to this coastal location. Park at the gate, and follow the gravel road heading east for a couple hundred yards. The road forks to the left, and this will take you to a clearing, allowing good views of migrants. On the northern edge of this clearing, continue down a wide path for another couple hundred yards, until it intersects with another gravel road. Going right will take you back to the main gate. Going left will take you to the shoreline between North Point and the point that looks south to Gull Island. During both spring and fall migration the road through this area can be teeming with birds. The morning sun warms the east side of the island first, and the insects are more active here. Although birds can be seen throughout the island, this is one of the most productive spots.

Vireos, such as Blue-headed, Yellow-throated, and Philadelphia, if you are lucky enough to see them in the spring, will serenade you, along with a number of warbler species including Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue, Black-throated Green, and Blackburnian. Other spring migrants encountered are Scarlet Tanagers, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Great-crested Flycatchers, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. The variety in the woods during fall migration can rival or exceed that of spring. Fall highlights include Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Brown Thrashers, Eastern Towhees, and both kinglets. On one occasion we found a Prothonotary Warbler not far down the road from the main gate. Other warblers of note seen in fall are Connecticut, Northern Parula, Prairie, Blackpoll, and Northern Waterthrush.

Continue walking north to the shoreline south of North Point. From this spot you can walk along a sandy trail to your right, and after a short distance there will be a small pond on the right. This is a good spot for wading birds throughout the summer,

and Spotted Sandpipers have nested here. As you walk along the shoreline, you will have a beautiful view of Nasketucket Bay, with Ram Island in the distance. Summer months will bring terns feeding close to shore, while winter brings the sea ducks. The shoreline gets pretty rocky at this point, so it is best to turn back. Once you enter the woods again, continue walking south down the gravel road. There will be a few side paths on your left that will give you a good view of a salt marsh with grassy uplands. During the fall this is one of the best spots for first views of migrating White-throated Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos.

Continue south, and go past the path that intersected this gravel road. Keep your eyes on the tree line to your left for migrants. After a few minutes the road bears sharply to the right, leading you back to the main gate. At this point you will notice a small path that breaks off to the left. This will take you to a more heavily wooded area, which can also be loaded with migrants during spring and fall. Shortly you will come to a small clearing with pine trees that have harbored Blackpoll and Pine warblers, Brown Creepers, and Golden-crowned Kinglets. The path heads east and a few hundred feet farther opens up into a salt marsh, with a short walk to the shoreline at East Cove. The same birds we wrote about at Edgewater Drive can be found here. This area is seldom visited, and the solitude that envelops this part of the island is a welcome change from the other places in Fairhaven.

Little Bay Conservation Area

When you have finished taking in the beauty of the marsh and surrounding views, head back toward the main gate. Return to the west on Goulart Memorial, and turn right onto Scoticut Neck Road. Travel north for 3.1 miles, and take a right onto Little Bay Road. Very quickly you will see a sign for Little Bay Conservation Area. The road going in has a few major potholes, so watch out! After heavy rains it is almost impassable unless you have a four-wheel-drive vehicle. The road winds 0.6 mile through a mixture of forest and thickets with a salt marsh at the end.

This is an area where you can find your typical year-round woodland species, such as Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Downy Woodpecker. The extensive thickets will have Eastern Towhees, Northern Cardinals, Hermit Thrushes, Carolina Wrens, Northern Mockingbirds, and different sparrows, depending on the season. Migrants during spring and fall find this reserve a welcome stop. At the end of the road you will see a salt marsh with another view of Little Bay. The birds that were mentioned earlier in this article for Edgewater Drive might also be found here.

Fort Phoenix Area

After birding this area, take a right onto Scoticut Neck Road, and go 0.6 mile to Route 6. Turn left, and travel west for 1.4 miles. At Fairhaven High School take a left onto Main Street. Head south for 0.7 mile, where Main Street abruptly ends. Look to your right toward New Bedford harbor for ducks during fall and winter. Turn left on Church Street, and take the first right on Fort Street. Travel south for 0.6 mile, where the road comes to an end at a parking lot.

This is Fort Phoenix, a historic landmark. Mounted cannons still overlook Buzzards Bay, and it is worth a few minutes of your time to read the plaques describing the rich history of the fort. This area is most productive in the winter, but there are birds to be found throughout the year. Keep in mind that from late June through Labor Day there is a fee to park at the beach. During the day it can be quite crowded with people, so an early evening visit is best. The bluffs in front of the main parking lot and the path to the hurricane dike are great spots to view numerous wintering waterfowl. Brant, Common and Barrow's goldeneyes, all three scoter species, Common Eiders, Long-tailed Ducks, and both scaup species can be seen. Also present during the winter are Common and Red-throated loons, Horned Grebes, and a good assortment of gulls. Summer brings Laughing Gulls, Common Terns, Least Terns, and American Oystercatchers.

The woods and thickets to the east of the parking lot can hold migrants in spring and fall. In winter several species of sparrows can be seen feeding along the grassy edge, with an occasional Yellow-rumped Warbler working the bayberry bushes. Hermit Thrushes and Yellow-breasted Chats can also be found in the thickets at this time of year. The large area of lawn sometimes has Snow Buntings and Horned Larks.

You are now ready to head back to Route 6, where there are many places to eat if you did not pack a meal. We hope this article will allow you to maximize your time to cover as many places as possible. There are many side roads and thickets in Fairhaven, but we have tried to describe the most productive places. The Paskamansett Bird Club leads walks to this area; if you are interested in either the trips or recent sightings in Fairhaven, contact Michael at britmm@juno.com.

Note: As we were finishing this article, a terrible tragedy occurred that will greatly affect birding in Fairhaven. A barge carrying number-6 fuel oil suffered a gash, and almost 100,000 gallons of oil leaked out into Buzzards Bay. The prevailing winds and currents made Scoticut Neck and West Island ground zero. The devastation that has occurred along this pristine shoreline is truly appalling. At this date, May 1, 2003, most of the outer shoreline south of Winsegansett Heights to Wilburs Point and continuing to the southern tip of East Cove is covered with oil the consistency of liquid tar. Hundreds of people are working to control this oil slick, but apparently there is still a lot of oil out there. We hope Winsegansett Heights and Edgewater Drive will be spared, but only time will tell. Many loons and eiders have already washed ashore where volunteers are doing their best to save them. The greatest concern is for the nesting colonies of Roseate Terns on Ram Island off Mattapoisett and Bird Island off Marion. We hope enough of the oil can be cleaned up so it will not interfere with their nesting success. If you would like to be updated on closed areas or sections still accessible in Fairhaven, please contact Michael at 1-508-990-3910 or brittmm@juno.com. 

Michael Boucher has had a great passion for birding and nature photography for over 20 years. He is a past president of the Paskamansett Bird Club, compiles the New Bedford Christmas Bird Count, and participates in numerous local bird surveys. Michael has written previously for Bird Observer ("Birding in Dartmouth and Westport During Fall and Winter," BO 23:4, August 1995, pp.192-98). He resides in North Dartmouth, Massachusetts, with his

wife and daughter. **Dan Zimmerlin** has been an avid birder for at least 25 years, with a special interest in bird taxonomy and distribution. He is the author of *A Field Checklist of the Birds of Bristol County, Massachusetts*. For a copy of the checklist, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope and \$1.00 to: Dan Zimmerlin, 88 Norwood Avenue, Warwick, RI, 02888.



EMPTY NEST?

Has your last kid (finally)
left home?

Or maybe you just retired?

If you find yourself with extra time on your hands and an urge to do something creative and meaningful, *Bird Observer* is looking for a new Managing Editor. You don't have to be a superstar birder or a grammarian; the most important requirement is an obsession for organization.

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Listen to the (Northern) Mockingbird

Joseph T. Leverich

One of my oldest memories involves Northern Mockingbirds. I was three or four years old, and I had walked out into my yard carrying our cat. In a flash, I was dive-bombed by mockingbirds, which flew down so close to my face that they almost touched me. My mother explained that they were upset by the cat, but I doubted her explanation since the birds continued to attack me even when I went out without the cat. My mother said this was because mockingbirds have good memories. I was most eager to grow up, since the birds never seemed to attack my elders. Perhaps their larger size was intimidating. Young ones are quick to note the advantages of being large.

Older family and friends often called attention to the mockingbird's song. My aunt swears that some years before I was born, one of the local mockingbirds used to repeat the melody of an etude by Chopin that she was fond of playing. All the adults would remark about how happy the birds sounded. After a bad dream, if I woke in the middle of the night, I often heard them singing. I wondered why they should be so especially happy in the middle of the night.

There are two other outstanding mockingbirds in my history:

The first was a bird in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge that copied the songs of other species quite literally. By this time in my life, I could recognize many bird species by their songs, but when one hears a mockingbird mimicking these songs, one normally hears extreme liberties being taken with the basic themes. Not so for this bird. That year we warned many birders not to identify birds by song when they were near the wet dell. With extreme concentration to detail, it was usually possible to detect slight differences in the mockingbird's version, but it did require a real focusing on the overall timbre of the sound. The thematic pattern was quite accurate. We began to regard this bird as a herald of recent changes in the local avian population. On the date that Scarlet Tanagers arrived, he would already be singing their song. Some days he would sing a new song, and frustratingly we could not yet find that species. All of us remained baffled about one song, however, when one morning the bird let out the *Kick, kick, kick, kiddick, kiddick...* of a Virginia Rail. We wondered whether this mockingbird was in any way more successful in excluding the various species he was mimicking from his territory by virtue of his greater accuracy in rendition.

The second outstanding bird was one that lived in the shrubbery around Brookline High School and its neighboring houses. In the spring there was often an American Kestrel that would pass a few days with us at the High School, and the kestrel would chase the mockingbird once or twice each day. The reaction of the mocker was to dive into the thickest shrubs, and then, safely ensconced inside, he would belt out the kestrel's own call. But he never succeeded in forcing the kestrel out of his territory.

It's time to drop my pretense. The facts above are all true and properly stated, but I have deliberately attempted to lure you into interpretations of these facts that are at best quite unlikely, if not entirely wrong. Here is the real story:

Both male and female Northern Mockingbirds sing, and they sing in both spring and summer (February - August) and then again in the fall (late September - early November). They occasionally sing even in the winter. The biggest surprise for me was that the spring and fall repertoires are thought to share only 1 percent of the various song types. Moreover, the repertoires vary from year to year, even though they continue to grow. The birds keep, at a minimum, from 35 percent to 63 percent of the song types from year to year.

The female tends to sing very softly, with a smaller repertory in the spring. At this season she sings only when the male is off territory. In the fall, female song varies from individual to individual, according to her plans for a winter territory. If she sets up her own separate territory, she sings loudly and forcefully. If she joins with her mate in maintaining a common territory, she sings less frequently, for a shorter period, and with fewer constituent melodies.

Two of the four calls of the Northern Mockingbird are the ones you surely will know: the chat call and the chatburst. The first is explosive, short, loud, a broad spectrum of tones all together. It is typically the first sound made in the morning, and it seems to spread from mockingbird to mockingbird.

In joint defense of a common territory in the fall, the two birds wander around over a larger area than they claimed in the spring. In this season, conflicting territorial pretensions are likely to evoke chatbursts (a series of 2-8 chat notes, separated by only 50 milliseconds). This is the common vocalization used against territorial intrusions by nonneighboring conspecifics. (Neighbors fairly often sneak into each other's territories to gain access to abundant sources of fruit.)

I could find nothing specific in the literature about fall song for the male, so I spent time this past year in Dorchester with the window open, even after the temperature had dropped. The male's fall song seems to be constructed out of many different song types, all of which resemble alarm calls or other calls of local species. In simple terms, in the spring the male sings mostly songs of other species, in the fall he sings mostly their calls. Most constituent elements of the vocalizations are shorter in the fall, and so I rarely could pin down exactly which species the male was mimicking. It all sounded rather birdy, and not very recognizable.

In the spring, many of the song types will be derived from the advertising songs of other species in the immediate vicinity. Listen carefully, and you should have no trouble hearing the song of Eastern Kingbirds (morning song), American Robin, Tufted Titmouse, Northern Cardinal, Carolina Wren, White-breasted Nuthatch, etc. Several studies have discovered no relationship between intrusions into the territory by birds of other species, attack frequency by mockingbirds, and dietary overlap. In addition, there are few data and little compelling evidence to argue that the spring or fall songs are directed *against* birds of a different species. Ornithologists conclude

that Northern Mockingbirds do not maintain interspecific territories, i.e., they make no effort to prevent individuals of other species from entering their territories. (There is one notable exception here: Northern Mockingbirds repel Cedar Waxwings from fruiting trees in their territories and occasionally even kill them [Hedrick and Woody 1983].)

Males sing from the tops of isolated trees, from concealed perches in the trees, on the ground, in flight, during the flight display, while foraging, with food in their mouths, even while copulating. Males have not been heard singing from a completed nest as vireos do, although they occasionally sing from the nesting site at a low volume when the nest is first started. Males that have the greatest versatility (variety) and the shortest length for individual song types are the ones most likely to attract mates and begin nesting. Younger males may have only about 45 different song types; older birds often have over 300 different types in their repertoires.

The individual song types are acquired from the songs and calls of other birds (including other mockingbirds), the sounds of nonavian species, and mechanical sounds (so much for Chopin melodies). They also incorporate the calls of their own young into their repertory (or perhaps they remember these calls from their own youth).

Derrickson (1988) studied the variability in repertory over time, relating it to stages in the nesting cycle, behavioral situation, and individual. All of the versatility measures varied synchronously (over time), and they all increased from year to year. It was noted that approximately 25 percent of the song types were heard only once (as was the case with the Virginia Rail imitation in Mount Auburn). "I tried that song, didn't like it." Bout length (the number of times that an individual motif is repeated before switching to a new theme) increased over time, peaking during the time when the offspring were fledging. One could speculate that this has to do with the necessity of teaching the young birds a minimal list of song types. The recurrence interval (number of intervening bouts before an abandoned song type is again repeated) was shortest during patrolling bouts and while countersinging with other males, longer during the nesting and fledging stages, and longest during the courting stage (Derrickson 1987).

In summation, the most accurate metaphor I can think of to explain male mockingbird song is that he is serenading his mate. Although he may sing in response to other stimuli, he does not do so consistently, nor will he employ as large a repertory.

Mockingbirds usually produce more than one brood of offspring per year (occasionally up to four broods in some places, but presumably not so many in New England). The broods overlap in timing, i.e., the male will be feeding one brood, while the female incubates a second clutch of eggs. Occasionally, a male will acquire a second mate. If a male neighbor dies, for example, it is common for the male survivor to incorporate the neighbor's territory into his own, taking over responsibilities for the other female. Also, if a male possesses an unusually large territory of his own at the outset in the spring, then infrequently a second lone female

will appear, which the male courts. He will choose a nest site for her on the outskirts of his territory (as far as feasible from the already resident female) (Derrickson 1989). Thus, lone unmated females are essentially nonexistent among Northern Mockingbirds. If a researcher removes a female from the pair, there is no ready replacement, and the male normally remains unmated for some time.

The bigamous practices of some of the males, together with a sex ratio biased in favor of more males, means that there will often be an unmated male in our neighborhood. An unmated male shows his eagerness to find a mate by singing at night, most frequently from midnight to four o'clock. The bird is definitely not "happy." Since singing is related to light intensity, birds living in artificial environments that have extra lighting sing more at night. This is mainly true for unmated males, but occasionally, if the light is bright enough, mated males will also sing. The same is true for the nights immediately before, during, and after a full moon. An unmated male projects his song in many different directions, but often outward from his territory, as if broadcasting for any possible available female. Mated males project their songs more frequently into their own territories.

It remains to discuss the attack on me and my cat. Surely it is possible that the attack on the two of us was indeed triggered by the cat, especially since I was holding her a few feet up, more nearly at the level of the possible nest, and surely this was the most intense of the assaults I endured. Sprunt (1964) remarks on the tendency of Northern Mockingbirds to "bedevil" cats and dogs, with repeated dive-bombing and very close approach. However, some ornithologists question whether this is serious nest defense or possibly a form of play, attacking animals of the right size that are not normally successful predators against them and their young. A more important point is that the attacks on me may well have been triggered before the cat incident. Possibly I ignored the bird's protests until they reached a certain level of intensity. Adult birds certainly learn individual humans who repeatedly enter their territories. They will selectively attack these humans who seem to be potential predators, while completely tolerating other humans who enter the territory less frequently or who seem to pose less of a threat. Merritt (1984) discusses this case and notes that you can put yourself on the enemy list by approaching the nest much too closely, or approaching it when the fledglings are in it or nearby. He was able to get off the enemy list of one pair of birds by wearing a hat. Presumably adding a crest to your plumage makes you a different individual (species?).

Trying to develop information about the song habits of birds with such large repertoires is truly energy-intensive. Most of the researchers in this area have examined many hours of song, but their attention has been directed to very few individual birds. Do you have Northern Mockingbirds in your neighborhood? Are you able to distinguish (at least the common) species by song and call? If not, try learning the songs of your resident species, one or two at a time, and while you are at it, listen for the variations of that song within mockingbird serenades.

Remember that mockingbird songs have motifs that are usually repeated at least two times. The silent spaces between the repetitions of the motif are much shorter

than the spaces between these motifs. You should certainly experiment with transcribing the melody. In his new book, *Sibley's Birding Basics*, David Sibley devotes ten pages (Chapter 8) to material relating to song. He demonstrates a simple way of turning their songs into squiggles; pauses are naturally shown as spaces in the overall pattern. You do not need the speed of a shorthand stenographer. Mockingbirds repeat individual song types several times; you can simply append a number to your first drawing of the type.

Oh, yes, one last thing: I have dispersed 1800 miles from my natal territory, grown gray (Definitive Basic plumage), and become quite large, but my local resident Northern Mockingbird still attacks me. 🐦

Sources

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The Introduction section of this article reviews other hypotheses concerning possible functions of mockingbird song. Intersexual attraction as a primary function of singing is widely viewed as the most likely explanation of the function of song, but it has not been verified as the only function to the exclusion of all other possibilities.

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This is by far the best short and general treatment of the species. Much of the material above can be found in this text, together with the references to the original research covering the individual facts.

The fascicles of *The Birds of North America* typically are extremely clear and stylish; they are comprehensive in coverage; and they can function almost as an annotated bibliography. Some town libraries have purchased the series. You should try to locate a copy near you so that you can learn more about the species that interest you. If your local library does not own a set, perhaps you could persuade them to add it to their collection.

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Joseph T. (Terry) Leverich grew up in Louisiana. He has lived in Massachusetts for the last fifty years. He is a retired mathematics secondary school teacher and is currently Managing Editor of *Bird Observer*.



NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD BY ANON.

From *Bird Observer* Vol. 1, No. 3 (May - June 1973)



EDITOR'S PAGE

NEW NAMES

As you will notice in the compilation in the April Summary, we are using the new names adopted by the thirty-second supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check List of North American Birds. A more detailed account will be published in a future edition. In brief, the following changes have been made:

Wilson's' Petrel	becomes	Wilson's' Storm Petrel
Common Egret	"	Great Egret
Widgeon	"	Wigeon
Shoveler	"	Northern Shoveler
Common Scoter	"	Black Scoter
Pigeon Hawk	"	Merlin
Sparrow Hawk	"	American Kestrel
Upland Plover	"	Upland Sandpiper
Yellow-shafted Flicker	"	Common Flicker
Traill's Flycatcher	splits	(Willow Flycatcher "fitz-bew"
		(Alder Flycatcher "fee-bee-o"
Catbird	becomes	Gray Catbird
Myrtle Warbler	"	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Baltimore Oriole	"	Northern Oriole
Slate-colored Junco	"	Dark-eyed Junco

Results of a Three-year Waterbird Survey in the Deerfield River Watershed in Massachusetts

Patricia Serrentino and Jennifer Strules

INTRODUCTION

From 1999 to 2001, 24 wetlands in the Deerfield River watershed were surveyed for the Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) and seven waterbird species: Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), King Rail (*Rallus elegans*), Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*), Sora (*Porzana carolina*), and Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*). The primary objectives of the study were to: (1) gather baseline data on waterbirds and their habitats; (2) identify biologically significant wetlands, for example, those that supported rare waterbirds and/or a high number of waterbird species; and (3) increase landowners' and citizen monitors' awareness of the value and diversity of wetland resources in their communities.

Several of the target species have special status in Massachusetts: the Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, Least Bittern, and Sedge Wren are Endangered; the King Rail is Threatened; and the Common Moorhen is a Species of Special Concern (Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife). In the Northeast the Pied-billed Grebe, American Bittern, and Sedge Wren have declined in portions of their breeding range in the last several decades (Gibbs and Melvin 1992a, b, d). The breeding populations of these three species, in addition to those of the Sora and Common Moorhen, have decreased in Massachusetts during the same period (Veit and Petersen 1993; Crowley 1994). The King Rail has disappeared from previously known breeding sites in Massachusetts (Veit and Petersen 1993). The status of the Least Bittern is difficult to assess because of its secretive habits; however, this species has probably also declined in Massachusetts and other parts of the Northeast (Gibbs and Melvin 1992c.; Veit and Petersen 1993). At the present time, the Virginia Rail appears stable in Massachusetts (Veit and Petersen 1993; Crowley 1994).

The loss and alteration of wetland habitats are often cited as the major cause of the decline of these wetland-dependent birds in Massachusetts, as well as throughout the Northeast. It has been estimated that from 1780 to the mid-1980s, Massachusetts lost approximately 28 percent of its wetlands (Dahl 1990). In addition to wetland loss and alteration, environmental contaminants, acidification, and human disturbance have also contributed to reductions in the breeding populations of these species (Eddleman et al. 1988; Gibbs and Melvin 1992a, b, c, d).

Two local watershed groups sponsored this project: the Green River Watershed Preservation Alliance and the Deerfield River Watershed Association (DRWA). The project was modeled, in part, on the Marsh Monitoring Project, an on-going program

that surveys waterbirds and amphibians in the Great Lakes basin (Weeber and Vallianatos 2000).

METHODS

Study Area: The waterbird study took place in the Massachusetts portion of the Deerfield River watershed. The Deerfield River drains a 1722 sq km (665 sq mi) area located in southern Vermont and northwestern Massachusetts. Twenty-four wetlands were surveyed in nine towns (Figure 1).

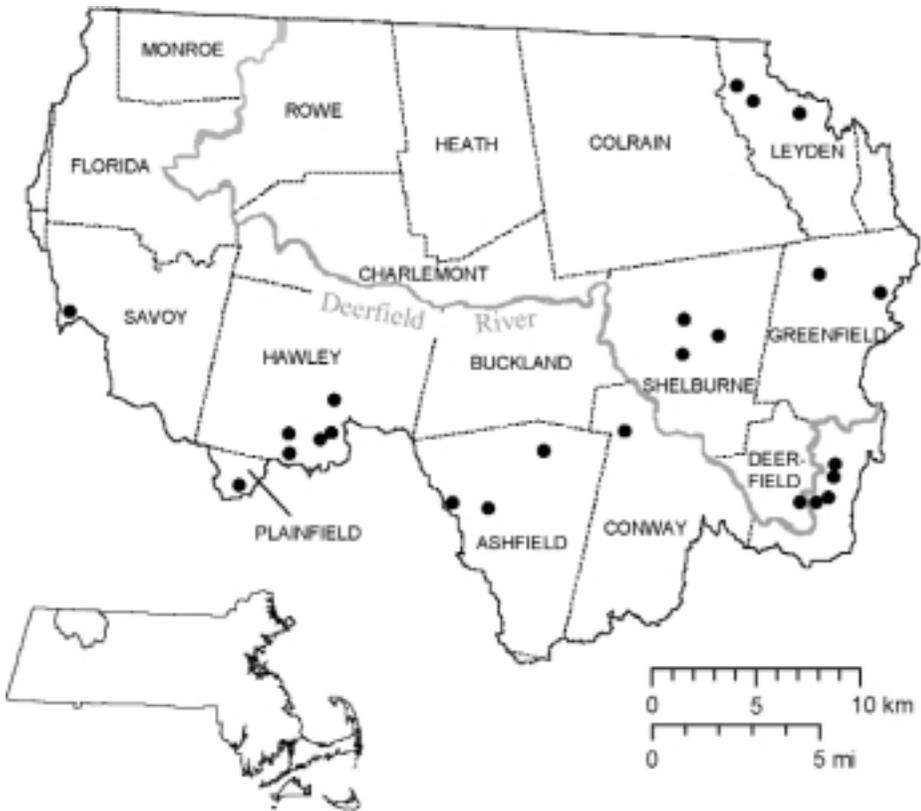


Figure 1: Location of wetland survey sites in the Deerfield River watershed, Massachusetts, 1999-2001. Twenty-four wetlands were surveyed in nine towns. Solid circles represent survey sites.

Wetland Evaluations: Wetlands had to meet several criteria to be included in the project. We chose sites that contained areas of suitable breeding habitat for the target species - emergent vegetation, such as cattails (*Typha* spp.), grasses (rattlesnake grass *Glyceria canadensis*, blue-joint *Calamagrostis canadensis*), sedges (tussock sedge *Carex stricta*, wool grass *Scirpus cyperinus*), and rushes (soft rush *Juncus effusus*). Shrub swamps were included because some waterbirds tolerate varying amounts of shrub vegetation (Forbush 1925; Gibbs and Melvin 1992b.). Other requirements

included safe access to sites for volunteer surveyors and permission from landowners to survey their wetlands.

We used aerial photo-interpretation to classify each wetland according to the type and amount of wetland habitat present. This information was used to determine if there was a relationship between the quantity and type of wetland habitat available, and the presence or absence of waterbirds at each site. Aerial photo-interpretation is defined as the process of identifying wetland habitats on aerial photographs using a stereoscope. The stereoscope magnifies the image and allows the photo-interpreter to see the landscape in three dimensions. Using this system, the habitat in each wetland was classified as deep marsh, shallow marsh, aquatic bed, shrub swamp, or open water. Deep marsh and shallow marsh are emergent wetlands primarily distinguished by differences in water depth (Swain and Kearsley 2000). Deep marshes average from 15 cm to 1.0 m deep (6 in to 3.3 ft), whereas shallow marshes are usually 15 cm (6 in) deep or less. Aquatic bed includes areas where the water surface is covered by the leaves and flowers of rooted or floating plants, e.g., water lilies (*Nuphar variegatum*, *Nymphaea odorata*), pondweeds (*Potamogeton* spp.), and water-shield (*Brasenia schreberi*) (Cowardin et al. 1979).

Shrub swamps are dominated by deciduous woody plants (meadowsweet *Spiraea latifolia*, willows *Salix* spp., speckled alder *Alnus rugosa*) (Cowardin et al. 1979).

Bird Surveys: The Sedge Wren and seven waterbird species were surveyed by broadcasting recordings of their songs and calls, and listening or watching for a response. This method was developed for species that reside in inaccessible habitats or where visibility is hampered by vegetation (Johnson et al. 1981), and for secretive species, such as rails, limpkins, and bitterns (Marion, O'Meara and Maehr 1981; Glahn 1974). Within each wetland, survey stations were placed at 200 m (656.2 ft) intervals. At each station, the observer broadcast calls of the eight target species for approximately eight minutes. The observer recorded all waterbirds seen or heard during the broadcast and a five-minute listening period following broadcast. This method allowed us to determine the relative abundance and distribution of waterbirds at each wetland (Crowley 1994; Johnson 1995).

Following the above protocol, we surveyed wetlands three times between May 1 and July 15, from 0.5 hr before sunrise until 4.5 hr after sunrise (Gibbs and Melvin 1993). Surveys were not conducted during rainy weather or if wind speeds were greater than 20-30 kph (13-18 mph).

RESULTS

Bird Surveys: Three of the eight target species were never observed or heard during the project: King Rail, Common Moorhen, and Sedge Wren. A Pied-billed Grebe was heard calling at the Shelburne-C site in April 2000; however, it was never detected during subsequent surveys of the same area. The Virginia Rail was the most commonly encountered species, occurring at a high of 30.8 percent of stations in 2000 (Table 1). This rail, observed at 11 wetlands during the three-year study, was the most widely distributed waterbird (Table 2). The American Bittern was detected at seven

Year	No. of Wetlands Surveyed	No. of Stations Surveyed	Percent of Wetlands Surveyed 3X	Waterbird Species			
				American Bittern	Least Bittern	Virginia Rail	Sora
1999	20	31	0	3.2	3.2	16.1	9.7
2000	24	39	75.0	12.8	5.1	30.8	12.8
2001	24	39	83.3	23.1	7.7	23.1	7.7

Table 1: The number of wetlands and stations surveyed per year, percent of wetlands surveyed three times, and percent of stations at which each waterbird species was detected during the three-year study. Note: The number of stations does not equal the number of wetlands surveyed because some wetlands contained more than one station.

Wetland	Number of Years Each Species Present at Wetland				Total Number Species Present	Number of Years Wetland Surveyed
	American Bittern	Least Bittern	Virginia Rail	Sora		
Shelburne - C	2	3	3	3	4	3
Conway - A	2		1	1	3	2
Shelburne - B	1		3		2	3
Hawley - E	2		2		2	3
Hawley - A	1		2		2	3
Deerfield - B	1		1		2	3
Deerfield - E			2	1	2	2
Deerfield - C			2		1	3
Hawley - D			1		1	3
Greenfield - A			1		1	3
Plainfield - A			1		1	3
Shelburne - A	1				1	2
Total Number of Wetlands Where Species Was Observed	7	1	11	3		

Table 2: Wetlands where waterbirds were observed, 1999-2001, including number of years each species present at a wetland, total species observed per wetland, and number of years each wetland was surveyed.

wetlands and was the second most frequently encountered species (occurring at a high of 23.1 percent of stations in 2001). The Sora and Least Bittern were rarely detected. The Sora was encountered at 7.7 - 12.8 percent of stations during the three-year study, whereas the Least Bittern was detected at 3.2 - 7.7 percent of stations. As expected, these latter two species were found at comparatively few wetlands.

To determine which wetlands were the most valuable to waterbird populations at the study area, each site was evaluated according to the following parameters: (1) total number of waterbird species present; (2) total number of breeding seasons that a species was observed at a site; and (3) total number of adult birds of each species detected. Seven wetlands supported two or more species of waterbirds (Table 2): two

sites in Shelburne, Hawley, and Deerfield, and one site in Conway. At four wetlands (Shelburne-B, C, Conway-A, Deerfield-E), at least one waterbird species was observed every year the site was surveyed.

We estimated the number of adult birds present at each wetland. A minimum of one adult (of any of the target species) was observed at least once in three years at four sites: Shelburne-A, Plainfield-A, Greenfield-A, and Hawley-D. Between one and three individuals of any species were present each year at six sites: Deerfield-B, C, E, Hawley-A, E, and Conway-A. Shelburne-C supported the highest number of individuals, ranging from eight to eleven each year.

Wetland Habitat Evaluations: Statistical analyses showed that the amount of shallow marsh, aquatic bed, and shrub habitats was significantly correlated with the total number of species observed at wetlands. In other words, more species of waterbirds were likely to be found at wetlands with a greater proportion of the habitat consisting of shallow marsh, aquatic bed, and shrub habitats rather than deep marsh and open water. When the same analysis was performed comparing the total area of all wetland habitats (e.g., the sum of all the wetland habitats found at each site) and the number of species observed, there was a significant positive relationship. As the total size of a wetland increased, the number of waterbird species present increased.

DISCUSSION

Comparison of Historic and Current Distribution and Status of Waterbirds in the Deerfield River Watershed: In the discussion below, we compare our results with historic observations (Bagg and Eliot 1937; Griscom and Snyder 1955), *Birds of Massachusetts* (Veit and Petersen 1993), and a recent waterbird survey conducted throughout Massachusetts by Crowley (1994). From 1991 through 1993 Crowley, and other observers, surveyed 177 freshwater and brackish wetlands throughout the state. Five wetlands in the Deerfield River watershed were included in Crowley's surveys, and four of those sites were included in our study (Deerfield-A, B, E, and Shelburne-B).

During this project, we detected four of the eight target waterbirds: American Bittern, Least Bittern, Virginia Rail, and Sora. Four species were never observed during the survey period (May 1 to July 15): Pied-billed Grebe, King Rail, Common Moorhen, and Sedge Wren. Given the rarity of these species in Massachusetts, it was not surprising that we did not detect them during our study. At the time of Bagg and Eliot's publication, Pied-billed Grebes were considered rare and local in the Connecticut River valley. During the field work for the Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA, unpublished), observations of this grebe were confined to coastal areas and Berkshire County (Veit and Petersen 1993). Crowley (1994) found Pied-billed Grebes at three of 177 wetlands statewide, with all reports from Worcester County. Our only record of a Pied-billed Grebe occurred at a wetland in Shelburne prior to the start of surveys. This bird was most likely a migrating individual, given the time of year (April 4) and the lack of subsequent observations. Pied-billed Grebes nest in beaver ponds, waterfowl impoundments, marshes, and emergent areas bordering large lakes and reservoirs (Andrle and Carroll 1988; Gibbs and Melvin 1992a).

Massachusetts is at the northern periphery of the King Rail's breeding range, which accounts in part for the species' rarity in our area. Bagg and Eliot (1937) did not report any nesting observations of King Rails in the Deerfield River watershed, and there has been no confirmed breeding in Massachusetts since 1979 (Veit and Petersen 1993). No King Rails were found in the Deerfield River watershed during Crowley's study (Crowley 1994).

From the early to mid-1900s, the Common Moorhen was characterized as rare and local (Bagg and Eliot 1937; Griscom and Snyder 1955). Veit and Petersen (1993) considered this species an "uncommon to rare local breeder; decreasing," and in fact, there has been no confirmed breeding of the Common Moorhen in the Deerfield River watershed since 1970 (Veit and Petersen 1993; Crowley 1994). This waterbird prefers breeding habitat similar to that of the Pied-billed Grebe: dense stands of emergent vegetation for nesting, with areas of aquatic bed and open water for foraging (Laughlin and Kibbe 1985; Andrie and Carroll 1988; Foss 1994). Although several wetlands in the watershed appeared to match the Common Moorhen's habitat preferences, it was never observed during the study.

Bagg and Eliot (1937) described the breeding habitat of Sedge Wrens as "wet meadows with long grass and many bushes," and the wren was characterized as local in its distribution, but not necessarily rare. A historic nesting site in the Deerfield River watershed was "The Bars" in Deerfield (located south of Old Deerfield). During the Massachusetts BBA, breeding Sedge Wrens were confirmed at only two sites, both in Hampshire County (Veit and Petersen 1993). Crowley (1994) did not include the Sedge Wren in his statewide study. Many of the sites that we surveyed were probably too wet for this species; however, several wetlands were bordered by suitable breeding habitat (e.g., wet meadows and abandoned fields).

Bagg and Eliot (1937) described the American Bittern as uncommon during the breeding season in the Connecticut River valley. Griscom and Snyder (1955), however, regarded it as "a common summer resident in suitable freshwater marshes at lower altitudes throughout the state." According to Veit and Petersen (1993), the American Bittern is an "uncommon breeder and declining." Although there were sightings of this species in the Deerfield River watershed during the Massachusetts BBA, breeding was not confirmed. We detected American Bitterns at 29 percent of wetlands during the three-year study, compared to 5 percent of wetlands in Crowley's 1994 statewide survey. Crowley found American Bitterns at one site in the Deerfield River basin (Deerfield - E). We did not observe this species at Deerfield - E during our study, however, possibly because we were unable to gain access to the entire wetland.

Bagg and Eliot (1937) described the Least Bittern in the Connecticut River valley as "probably regular but very rarely observed," and both Forbush (1925) and Griscom and Snyder (1955) believed that this bittern was probably often missed during the breeding season because of its extremely secretive habits. Veit and Petersen (1993) described the Least Bittern as "rare and local" during the breeding season. Historic and recent breeding records have been confined primarily to the area east of

Worcester County. Crowley (1994) found Least Bitterns at twelve sites statewide, with no sightings in the Deerfield River watershed. Although we did not try to confirm breeding, one or two adults were present at Shelburne - C during the entire three-year study.

Although Virginia Rails have always been common in Massachusetts (Forbush 1925; Bagg and Eliot 1937; Griscom and Snyder 1955), Griscom and Snyder (1955) concluded that they were declining due to loss of wetland habitat. Veit and Petersen (1993) characterized the Virginia Rail as the most common breeding rail in the state. Virginia Rails were detected at 61 percent of wetlands during Crowley's 1994 statewide survey, including four sites in the Deerfield River watershed. During our study this rail was found at 46 percent of wetlands and was the most frequently observed waterbird. We found Virginia Rails at three of Crowley's four sites.

Bagg and Eliot (1937) described the Sora as "rare in spring and breeding still more rarely" in the Connecticut River valley, and Griscom and Snyder (1955) considered the Sora locally common during the breeding season but declining. Soras were not often detected during our study. These rails were found at 13 percent of sites, which was similar to Crowley's (1994) results: 15 percent of wetlands statewide. Although Crowley (1994) found Soras at two sites in the Deerfield River watershed, we were only able to verify Soras at one of Crowley's two sites. However, we detected Soras at two sites that Crowley did not survey. During our study, the largest number of adult Soras was observed at Shelburne - C, where at least two or three pairs were present. Our findings are consistent with Veit and Petersen's (1993) characterization of the Sora as a rare breeding bird in Massachusetts. Most of their sightings during the breeding season were from localities in eastern Massachusetts (but not Cape Cod).

Waterbirds and Wetland Habitat Evaluations: In the Deerfield River watershed, wetlands that were more valuable to waterbirds tended to be larger and contained greater amounts of shallow marsh, shrub, and aquatic bed habitats than those that had fewer waterbird species. Larger wetlands are thought to support more species because they usually contain several types of wetland habitats and varying water depths (Brown and Dinsmore 1986; Gibbs and Melvin 1990). The greater diversity of habitat types and water depths provides a greater number of species with sites for nesting, foraging, and raising young. At our study site, waterbirds were found in wetlands ranging in size from 2.73 to 13.43 ha (6.74 to 33.17 ac). The mean size of the twelve wetlands where waterbirds were detected was 6.94 ha (17.14 ac). North Shelburne, at 13.43 ha (33.17 ac), contained the highest number of species and individuals of each species.

Future Recommendations: Because of the many threats faced by these rare and secretive waterbirds, it is imperative that we continue to monitor these species in the Deerfield River watershed. Eddleman et al. (1988) and Gibbs and Melvin (1992b, c) recommend that waterbird surveys occur at regular intervals to ascertain regional population trends. During our three-year study, many wetlands exhibited changes in water depth, flooding period, and vegetation composition, primarily because of beaver

activity. In the long term, the presence of beavers may result in the creation of additional suitable habitat for waterbirds by encouraging the growth of emergent vegetation and increasing the amount of open water. We hope to resurvey these wetlands in approximately five years to determine whether changes in waterbird species' distribution and abundance and wetland habitat types and adjacent land use have occurred. 

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Close Encounters

Douglas Chickering

There are birding moments out in the field that have a transcendent, almost metaphysical, quality to them. They turn into memories that are sharp, enduring, and incandescent. They are intensely private and communal simultaneously. Although infrequent, these moments are shared by all active birders; they are bright highlights in our lives. If you are in the field long enough and bird seriously enough, you will experience these close encounters. Like UFO sightings, birding close encounters can be described as being of three kinds.

Close Encounters of the First Kind

There are no banal birding experiences. Peering at raptorial specks in the sky holds some watchers in endless fascination. The same is true of picking through carpets of shorebirds or focusing on a tremor of movement deep in the underbrush. Each experience contains the potential for sudden, unexpected discovery. But a close encounter is always a particularly stellar event.

Many birds are wary of humans to a certain degree, and most spontaneously avoid human contact. Lois Cooper and I started that sunny May morning at the Grove at Salisbury State Beach. The migration had been building, and the winds the night before were steady and from the southwest. The Grove is a great migrant trap – a small mixed stand of trees and brush, near the ocean, stuck between the salt marshes and the dunes. I remember that the grove was pretty lively that morning with a good mixture of passerines. We walked our usual loop and found ourselves in the back northeast corner, when a bird flew into the sumac just to our right at eye level. It was not five feet away from us – a male Scarlet Tanager.

I have seen many paintings and photographs of birds. I have seen stuffed birds in a museum and even once visited those sad and confused birds in a well-intentioned and scientifically designed aviary. None of them had the true color of a bird in the wild; all were pale and sapped of vitality in comparison. In many cases the difference is subtle, but it is real. It is understandable why Van Gogh was driven mad in his attempt to duplicate the colors of nature. No matter how deep the genius or how varied the palette, no matter how good the lens or how expert the photographer, it is not possible to match the intensity and purity of the color of a tanager in the sun.

For those with a strong sense of color, there is a special, indescribable, almost sacred quality to the experience of seeing such colors as the rich yellow-turning-gold on the nape of a Prothonotary Warbler, or the ever-deepening orange on the breast of a Baltimore Oriole, or the shimmering, electric blue on the head of a Lazuli Bunting – and seeing them up close. There in the Grove on that morning was our Scarlet Tanager in the height of his manhood, all business and purpose, free and unfettered, fresh off the ocean, and heading home. There he was in his blazing red glory; the moment was endless and was over all too soon. To see a familiar bird, up close, to see its colors in all their glory, this is a Close Encounter of the First Kind.

Close Encounters of the Second Kind

There usually is a kind of lull during every long birding trip. Whether planned or unplanned, there seems to be a natural, unavoidable dead spot after the first rush of lifers found or missed. A pause to refresh and reassess. Lois and I were in just such a lull when we visited Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge for the second time during our Texas trip in 1999. We had arrived at the refuge near noon on a hot April day and had had lunch in the shade of a picnic area near the headquarters parking lot. After lunch we looked for another quiet place to sit in the shade, loaf the afternoon away, and see what birds came our way. We walked the Kiskadee trail and found such a place – a bench at the edge of a small, tepid, overgrown pond, with plenty of shade, and a view down into the stagnant shallow pool. The afternoon settled in over us in a dreamy, hot haze, as languid as bathwater. There was a light breeze rustling through the trees, and the only other sounds of the day were the distant squeaks and whistles from a persistent Great-tailed Grackle and the occasional, desultory call from the canopy directly over our heads: *kisk-a-dee...kisk-a-dee*. The afternoon drifted aimlessly into a kind of drowsiness, when abruptly we were startled from our torpor by something darting into our immediate presence at eye level – a hummingbird. Oblivious to our presence, it started to feed with a quick agility upon some red flowers in front of the bench, which we hadn't really noticed before. I recognized the hummingbird immediately: the flashing emerald back, the fanning tail that shone like burnished copper, the arresting coral bill with dark tip, and the rich buff belly. We sat motionless, holding our breaths, before I quietly said, "Buff-bellied Hummingbird." I spoke reluctantly, because I didn't want to break the spell, but I also wanted to make sure that Lois knew we were in the presence of a life bird.

The hummingbird flitted from flower to flower and even once hovered briefly right in front of us, as if puzzled by our presence. It fed with a quick determination, allowing us killer looks; then, in a blink, it was gone. It was an unforgettable moment, rare and fleeting – the close encounter with a life bird, a Close Encounter of the Second Kind.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind

What I classify as a Close Encounter of the Third Kind is quite similar to the other two, but not the same. There is the same surprise, and the bird may be new or familiar; yet during this encounter there is a unique element to the experience. Difficult to describe, it is even difficult to comprehend. The experience is so sudden, so unexpected and eerie, that it leaves the observer with the uneasy feeling that perhaps it didn't happen at all.

Lois and I were sitting on the bench in the Ralph Goodno Woods in Hellcat Wildlife Observation Area at Plum Island on a thoroughly pleasant summer afternoon. All that I remember about that afternoon is that there was no wind, there were no bugs, and practically no birds. We sat there luxuriating in the shade, when a form burst from the thickets in front of us, up toward the tree right above us. It was instantly recognized as a large bird, and as we stared, dumbfounded, a fully mature Yellow-crowned Night-Heron deftly landed on a branch of that tree, not eight feet

away. In most close encounters the bird is surprised at or unaware of our presence, but this had been clearly a deliberate act on the part of this heron. With motives we could only guess at, the bird had come in for a close look. It fixed on us a baleful, disapproving glare, and though I might be imagining it, I could feel a palpable sense of reproach from this bird. It was as if we had committed some unforgivable transgression, and the heron was there to confront us. Why was it there? Was it nesting nearby? We'll never know. The heron was silent and unafraid; it rocked lightly from side to side and bent its head lower in undisguised irritation. I was in awe at having such a fine bird so close, but also a little intimidated at its silent disapproval. I think I would have eventually surrendered to its hostile rebuke and left if the bird hadn't suddenly taken wing and disappeared.

There was another encounter, years ago, that left me with a decidedly different impression. Although I can't relate the exact date, I know it was in the spring and before the new parking lot had been installed at the Old Pines on Plum Island. I was at the Old Pines that morning and had followed the back trail, the one that was overgrown and closest to the road. I was looking for passerines, particularly warblers, when I met Barbara Drummond coming back up the trail. We stopped to exchange greetings and information. Both of us lamented the dearth of activity that May morning. Despite her unpromising report I continued down the trail, hoping to get lucky. In those days the trail was narrow, in places no wider than the back of your hand, and wound its way through sparse scrub forest to where the pine stand gave way to scrubby low trees and heavy brush. Not long after Barbara and I had parted company, I came upon a medium-sized cherry tree, ravaged by an infestation of small worms, which had in turn drawn in a dozen or so ravenous warblers. I remember that one was a beautifully plumaged Bay-breasted.

I took in the sight for a while, carefully scanning the tree and noting each bird that came into my binocular field. The notion slowly came upon me that, if I hurried, I would be able to catch up to Barbara and inform her of my discovery. She had mentioned wanting to find a Bay-breasted Warbler. I continued down the trail and picked up my pace, as I calculated that I was probably closer to the parking lot than she was. I was only vaguely aware of what was around me, as I concentrated on negotiating the winding trail. I crested one small rise and nearly blundered into an American Bittern standing in the middle of the path. It wasn't a yard away, and we were aware of one another at the same instant. We drew in a startled breath simultaneously, and I was instantly taken with its fear-filled gaze. Instinctively, the bittern drew itself up into its hiding posture: rising erect, beak stretching upward, body tense and slender, eyes fixed upon me. I looked into yellow eyes wide with fear and confusion and felt a growing regret pass over me. An endless moment hung suspended in time, as we silently regarded one another. And in that moment something unspoken, perhaps unknowable, passed between us. Something so fleeting and subtle I cannot adequately articulate its nature. I stared into the bittern's stricken gaze and was strangely aware of something – either a flicker of mutual connection or a wall of impenetrable misunderstanding. I shall never know which. The bittern could see that its usual defense wasn't working and wasn't about to work. I was so close,

and it was so exposed. So it slowly dipped into a crouch, pushed itself up into slow, lazy flight, and like an apparition disappeared over the trees, leaving me bewildered and breathless. I was appalled that I had inflicted such terror, and relieved that the bittern had escaped my harmless clutches. I shall never forget that moment or that bittern, and I suspect that bittern never forgot me.

I know that every serious birder will experience a Close Encounter of the First Kind from time to time. With some bold birds, like catbirds or kinglets, it occurs fairly often. It is the natural legacy and reward of constantly being in the field. Those of us who are lucky will experience a Close Encounter of the Second Kind. As for a Close Encounter of the Third Kind? I don't know. They are so ethereal and so deeply personal that one is uncertain whether they really did occur, or whether they were simply something originating from the deepest recesses of the mind. 🦶

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AMERICAN BITTERN BY DAVID LARSON

FIELD NOTES

The Bird that Came in from the Cold

John Adams

In a screened porch at our home, we have a hot tub, which lets us enjoy the porch all year long. There is a gap between the roof and the wall in one corner, but it presented no problem, so I did nothing about it.

In the spring of 2001 I noticed a small pile of sticks and grass on a metal shelf hanging on the wall. I was puzzled, but moments later I saw a small, brown bird fly onto the shelf. It was carrying pine needles, which it inserted purposefully into the pile, then it flew to the top of the wall, ducked under the roof, and disappeared through the gap. Moments later, it entered again and added more material. This time I got a clear view of a Carolina Wren. In the next few days I often went to watch as one, and sometimes two birds continued construction, but then all activity stopped. I was disappointed and thought perhaps my presence had driven them away.

In March of 2002 the process started again, with the nest growing every day, wedged between two dried starfish and behind a drinking glass. It was a fascinating process, as one bird made its contribution, and the other (presumably the female) tossed it on the floor and fussily rearranged the nest to her satisfaction. Twice the male picked up a small starfish and attempted to insert it in the nest, but both times the female tossed it out. By March 21 the nest was complete — an impressive domed structure with an entry hole on the side.

For a couple of weeks I rarely saw the birds, but at the end of April, the activity suddenly increased, with the male regularly delivering food to the female inside the nest. Soon the young stuck scrawny necks outside the nest to beg for the next delivery.

They gave every evidence of not only recognizing me, but accepting me as a safe presence. When I entered the room or sat in the hot tub, they continued normal activity, but if a stranger entered, they would stop feeding, and in one case they attacked a group of neighborhood children trying to enter the tub. If I was not in the room, and they perceived danger, as in the case of a red squirrel making its way into the porch, I would hear the bird giving its *zweep* danger call. When I went to look, it would be pecking on the window, giving the distinct impression that it was summoning me for assistance. Whether or not this was the bird's intention, it worked. I would remove the perceived danger, and the bird would appear to relax.

The young fledged on May 9, and it was not long before the pair started a second brood, and I was able to enjoy the experience all over again. In mid-July I could hear activity in the yard that suggested the young had fledged, and I went onto the porch to look. A single fledgling was left behind, perching on the nest. I walked over to the shelf to see if it was all right, and it jumped onto my head. Startled, I straightened up,

but the young bird stayed, so I walked outside to where I could hear the others. My passenger jumped off my head to join its family.

In most cases of nest watching I suppose the story would stop here with the successful raising of two broods, but this one doesn't. Late one afternoon in December 2002, I was in the hot tub, and a wren entered the porch, perched on the wall by its entry, then flew to a hanging fern, scuttled under the foliage, and disappeared. When I got out of the hot tub, I peered into the fern, and the wren was snuggled in, feathers fluffed out. It continued to use the fern for a few nights, but eventually switched to the old nest to sleep. I took temperatures morning and evening from the porch and an outside location, and they averaged a difference of 6°C (11°F), a significant difference for a southern bird trying to survive a New England winter. As during the breeding season, this bird tolerated my presence, but fled from or attacked others who entered the porch.

The double-duty nest seems to be a remarkable adaptation by the wren. In breeding season it is protected from predators and cowbird parasitism. In the winter it provides both protection and a warm location for sleeping. The wren often visits during the day as well, but ignores food and water I have put out for it. It is undoubtedly simply coming in from the cold. 

Sunbathing and Thermal Stress in an Immature Great Blue Heron

Jerome A. Jackson and William E. Davis, Jr.

In a previous article (Davis and Jackson 2000) we described sunbathing by a Great White Heron, generally considered a white morph of the Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*), and discussed the functions of sunbathing in birds. Probable functions include: (1) gaining heat, (2) losing heat, (3) drying of plumage, (4) ectoparasite reduction, and (5) mediation of vitamin D production through exposure to UV light. On March 10, 2001, we observed an immature Great Blue Heron sunbathing on Cross Dike Trail at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, Florida. These observations provide some additional insight.

At 10:50 a.m. we noticed a Great Blue Heron standing on dry land amid grasses in front of red mangroves at the edge of an approximately 10-meter-wide watercourse that runs the length of the trail. The heron had a solid gray crown (Figure 1) and was probably about a year old (*fide* characteristics described in Butler 1992). The heron was in a characteristic, hunched posture, its neck withdrawn and its head facing forward, partially in shadows, but partially in the sun. Gradually the shadows changed such that the heron was in full sun. At that point, the heron lowered its head, turned its neck, and tucked its head out of sight between its neck and body, completely obscuring its eyes. It remained in this posture about another two minutes. Then the

heron stretched its neck upward to its full extent, such that its head was once again in the shade of the mangroves. Within another two minutes, the heron lowered its right wing into a half delta-wing sunning position. About three minutes later, it drooped its left wing to complete the classic delta-wing posture (Figure 1). It continued directly facing the sun for another minute, then opened its bill and began gular fluttering. It continued gular fluttering, holding its wings in the delta-wing posture for another four minutes. Gular fluttering, like the panting behavior of dogs, provides for evaporative cooling from the mouth and reduces heat stress.

Why was this heron sunning? It was a warm day, and the tucking of its head behind its neck may have been a result of incipient heat stress or annoyance at the light intensity of the morning sun. The subsequent extension of the neck, positioning of its head in the shade, and gular fluttering suggest

that the heron was experiencing heat stress and needed to lose heat. While in the delta-wing posture, the underwing secondary coverts were elevated (see shadow of coverts in Figure 1), suggesting exposure of wing tissue to circulating air. This too could have been a cooling mechanism and suggests a heat loss function for the delta-wing posture.

However, if the bird were severely heat stressed, it needed only to move into the water or into the shade of the mangroves, either one only a meter away. We thus suggest that these observations of the use of delta-wing sunning posture support either the feather maintenance hypothesis (that exposing feathers to ultraviolet radiation might kill eggs of ectoparasites such as lice and mites) or the vitamin D synthesis hypothesis. We further suggest that heat stress caused by this feather maintenance activity resulted in gular fluttering and shaded head behavior. We acknowledge that the delta-wing posture would aid in radiating excess body heat but think that this thermoregulatory function was only incidental to the feather maintenance or vitamin D synthesis function. 🦶

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Figure 1: Great Blue Heron by Jerome Jackson

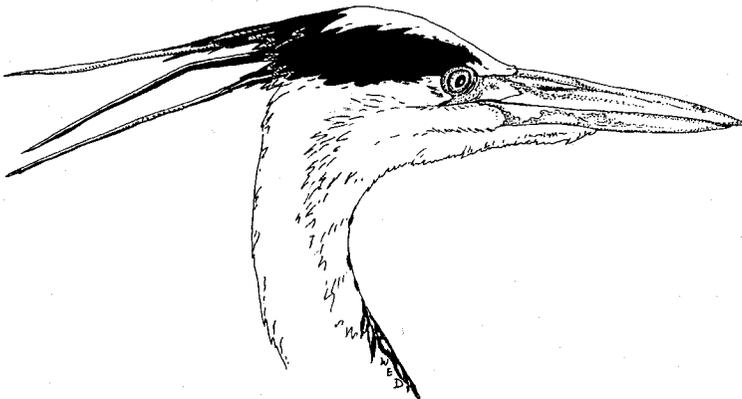
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Contribution No. 6 from the Whitaker Center for Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education at Florida Gulf Coast University.



TED DAVIS (LEFT) AND JERRY JACKSON ENGAGED IN SCIENTIFIC DISCUSSION IN FRONT OF A STRANGLER FIG. PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTE JACKSON.



GREAT BLUE HERON BY WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR.

ABOUT BOOKS

Town and Country

Mark Lynch

A Birder's Guide to Metropolitan Areas of North America. Paul Lehman, Editor. 2001. Colorado Springs, Colorado: American Birding Association.

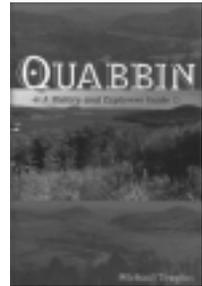
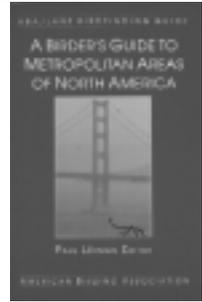
Quabbin: A History and Explorers Guide. Michael Tougias. 2002. Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts: On Cape Publications.

In 1999, Sheila Carroll and I spent much of our free time birding in the city of Worcester. To be frank, many folks look at Worcester as a pretty poky city that at first blush does not seem like it could be very “birdy.” Worcester has no ocean, like Boston or San Francisco, and no major river, like Springfield, not even a big lake, like Chicago. The few remaining green spaces are small and isolated, and its ponds are very developed along the shore and are often full of boaters. Winters are bitterly cold and snowy.

Worcester seems to have all the negatives of an urban environment and none of the positives. (No, I do not work for the Chamber of Commerce.) So why bird there?

For us, part of the inspiration for our Worcester Big Year was the Mass Audubon sanctuary at Broad Meadow Brook in Worcester. This small, narrow urban green space nestled between housing developments and auto graveyards proved to be a real Mecca for birds, especially migrants. If this tiny refuge could host such a variety of birds (and butterflies), what about the other parks and ponds of Worcester? I had also been studying how waterfowl utilize Worcester’s often-abused ponds and lakes and was surprised at the variety and number of ducks that do pass through the city’s ponds. Some even stay to nest. I must say that we were also inspired by projects like Take A Second Look (TASL), which has focused on monitoring waterbirds of Boston Harbor, as well as by legendary urban birders like Bob Stymeist. These people and projects taught me to not give up so easily on cities and to look a bit more closely at what green and blue spaces remained. Hopefully, we will help preserve the small green islands that are left. We live here after all; what do we know about the areas right around us?

1999 was a great year for urban birding in central Massachusetts. We saw 197 species, including some you would think of as highly unlikely in Worcester, such as American Bittern, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Common Moorhen, Golden Eagle, and Grasshopper Sparrow. All these very urban areas with such good birds! It was a revelation. But best of all was the fact that none of them were more than 15 minutes away from my house. Urban birding is often fun, rewarding, and convenient. You cannot beat that.



This is why I really looked forward to the publishing of the American Birding Association's thick *A Birder's Guide To Metropolitan Areas of North America*. Editor Paul Lehman states his purpose for assembling these "where-to-find-amid-the-skyscrapers" essays as: "We hope to show that these human population centers provide some of the best birding on the continent and how you can use your birding time here to best advantage" (p.1).

As Lehman explains, there are many reasons why birding in cities is fun and productive. As you might expect, there are many birders who live in the cities cited in this book, and they cover those small productive urban green pockets with real regularity. Therefore, there is a lot of information known about the status and distribution of bird species in these cities. Rarities are regularly found because of this intense coverage, and word is quickly spread. A birder visiting one of these cities will find it easy to learn "what is around." A local example of this phenomenon is Mount Auburn Cemetery. It is so intensively covered in spring migration that it is hard to believe any bird can pass through unidentified. All those eyes, all those visits, and all those records have combined to create an unrivaled body of knowledge about bird movements in that very small area.

The book is organized alphabetically by city name. Some essays are very detailed, while others are more general. Though some locations have been dealt with before in other ABA/Lane guides, many have not. There are details of when to visit to see the best birds, climate, car rentals, hotels, traffic, and local Rare Bird Alerts, though the depth of this information varies from essay to essay. Urban areas that may be unsafe for solo birders have most often been avoided, but a few are included and clearly described as such. A real diversity of American cities is described in detail. There are those cities that are well-known birding destinations, like New York City and San Francisco, but also cities that may not immediately spring to mind when thinking of birding, like Philadelphia and Cleveland. Canadian cities are also included, and there are chapters on Calgary, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg. What, no Moose Jaw? The essay on birding Boston, Massachusetts, was written by Robert Stymeist, Marjorie Rines, and Ron Lockwood; it is a truly fine and concise introduction to the area. The authors use the geographical limits of what is known as "Greater Boston," including cities like Cambridge and Winthrop.

This brings up an interesting point. Many of the essays in this book include spots well outside the actual city limits, but this makes sense in light of the stated purpose of the book. For instance, in the piece on Las Vegas, most of the prime birding spots mentioned are quite a few miles outside of the glare of the Vegas strip. The Pahrnagat National Wildlife Refuge, which is given a section, is more than 62 miles out of Vegas! For purists like myself, that's not urban birding, that's birding from a city. A 62-mile radius around Worcester would include some of Boston, all of Providence, and Quabbin Reservoir! But this book is not just about birding in a city, but also about where to go while you are visiting a city.

This ABA/Lane guide at 508 pages is one of the heftiest published. It is dense with information and birding possibilities. It is also one of the most practical of all the

“where-to-find” guides, because at some point we will all find ourselves in a big city, whether vacationing, on business, or visiting relatives. As the essays in *A Birder’s Guide to Metropolitan Areas of North America* show, “bright lights, big city” can mean a long life list and some great birding too.

But let’s not kid ourselves, a trip to the wild areas around us, whether ocean, desert, or forest, is always special and makes for a great day of birding. Though Massachusetts is a small state, we do have some very accessible areas that allow the casual birder to have a taste of several types of interesting natural habitats. One of these areas most often visited by birders is the huge Quabbin Reservoir in the center of the state. This is, at best, described not as a real wilderness, but as a very human-managed spot. Thomas Conuel summed up this unique aspect of Quabbin nicely by calling it “The Accidental Wilderness”; Michael Tougias has written what I think is one of the most satisfying guides to this complex area, in that it combines aspects of both a trail guide and a concise history of the area. No birder visiting the area should be without it.

There have been several other histories of the Quabbin area, notably the inexpensively produced, but nonetheless fascinating, books by J.R. Greene like *Creation of Quabbin Reservoir: Death of the Swift River Valley* and *The Day Four Quabbin Towns Died*. Tougias has already authored other histories of Massachusetts, like *King Philip’s War: The History and Legacy of America’s Forgotten Conflict*, coauthored with Eric B. Schultz. Tougias has also written about the natural areas of New England and his love of them. *River Days: Exploring the Connecticut River from Source to Sea* is simultaneously a guide to canoeing the Connecticut and a personal memoir of growing up on the river, as well as an entertaining history. It is Tougias’ ability to pull together these aspects of a natural history and trail guide with the human history of a spot that makes his Quabbin book so useful and fun to use.

Tougias starts with a history of the Swift River Valley towns of Dana, Enfield, Prescott, and Greenwich. He nicely summarizes the momentous decision to move the residents out and flood this scenic valley to provide Boston with a water supply for the future. Can you even imagine some project of this scale and with this amount of human impact even being considered today? There are chapters on moving the graves, the construction of the dams and aqueduct, visiting the Swift River Valley Historical Society Museum, and several chapters on odd and anecdotal stories of the Valley. These chapters are illustrated with numerous black-and-white photographs. These are by turns fascinating and poignant. There can be little doubt that Quabbin has a strange and unique history, somewhat sad, somewhat eerie. Quabbin is so much more than just a destination to tick Acadian Flycatcher or look for Golden Eagle.

The last half of this book is a fairly substantial hiking and biking guide, not just to Quabbin proper, but also to surrounding areas like Royalston and the Brookfields. Maps are simple, clear, and easy to understand. There are numerous details of historical and natural points of interest to look for. Specific birding information is not the purpose of this book, but some general information is given. There is a short chapter on Bald Eagles at Quabbin, which includes the history of the program to re-

introduce eagles as breeding birds in the state. Another chapter talks about typical birds you will find in the different habitats of Quabbin. It was here that I found one notable ornithological error. On page 159, under “Birds that inhabit fields and edges,” Tougias states: “Other birds you are likely to see in the fields at Quabbin are white-throated sparrows and Carolina and winter wrens.”

Though Carolina Wrens have certainly made recent inroads into central Massachusetts, and I have occasionally found them at Quabbin, they are certainly not a species to expect...so far at least. House Wrens on the other hand are everywhere where there are fields and brush.

But these are minor quibbles. The real purpose of *Quabbin: A History and Explorers Guide* is to give the reader the cultural and historical background to Quabbin, and then a good map to help the reader make some discoveries of their own in this very large and unique Massachusetts semiwilderness. 🐦

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Mark Lynch is a teacher, trip leader, and environmental monitor at the Mass Audubon sanctuary at Broad Meadow Brook in Worcester. He is the host of Inquiry, a talk show of the arts and sciences on WICN 90.5 FM. He is also a teacher and docent at the Worcester Art Museum. Mark fell in love with Quabbin immediately after his first visits in the 1970s, but fully admits that it took a bit longer to warm up to Worcester. He credits Broad Meadow Brook for turning him into a die-hard urban birder.



BOREAL CHICKADEE BY JIM BAIRD

BIRD SIGHTINGS

January/February 2003

Jim Berry, Seth Kellogg, Marj Rines, and Bob Stymeist

The first two months of the year were colder, wetter, and snowier than normal, making five consecutive months with below-normal temperatures. New Year's Day was rainy and mild, in fact the mildest day of the month, with 44° recorded in Boston. During January the temperature averaged 24.4° in Boston, 5.2° below normal and 12.7° colder than last year. The mercury was below 32° from January 13 until January 26. Rain totaled 1.81 inches during January in Boston, 2.11 inches less than normal, although persistent with measurable amounts falling on 13 days. Snowfall was just 4.2 inches in Boston, 8.4 inches less than the January average. The entire state had an appreciable snow cover all month.

In February the temperature averaged 26.3° in Boston, 5.3° below normal. The maximum temperature did not get above the freezing mark on 15 days during the month. Rainfall was about normal with 4.21 inches noted during the month. Snow was the big news during February: a total of 41.6 inches fell in Boston, 30.4 inches over the average. The seasonal total for Boston of 60.5 inches was 28.2 inches above the average. *R. Stymeist*

LOONS THROUGH ALCIDS

Two Pacific Loons reported during the period reflect this species' growing frequency in Massachusetts waters. Published reports going as far back as the 1930s show regular reports of this species (considered conspecific with Arctic Loon prior to 1985). However, only in recent years have four to six individuals per year been reported. There is a growing body of published information on loon identification, and, combined with improved optics and more birders in the field, it is an open question whether the increase in reports reflects an actual trend or simply better reporting. Notwithstanding this apparent increase, Pacific Loon remains on the MARC Review List because of the difficulty of identification, and written details (plus photographs and field sketches, if available) should always be included in reporting a Review List species. Also, observers should keep in mind that there is still no accepted record of Arctic Loon in Massachusetts, making documentation of either species even more important.

Rare grebes present somewhat less difficult identification problems, and in this group too some western species have become pretty regular. In the case of the **Eared Grebe**, that regularity is due largely to a single individual that has wintered in the Niles Beach area of East Gloucester for at least eight straight winters. Jerry Soucy reports that he has seen it for ten years, starting in the winter of 1994. Jerry recounts another loyal Eared Grebe that spent nine winters at Bass Rocks, also in East Gloucester, from 1964 through 1972, and logically asks, "What is the Cape Ann attraction?" Two **Western Grebes** showed up, one of which, in Nahant, delighted birders for almost three weeks in January. This species has long shown a tendency to winter in New England in small numbers. Interesting is the winter when these two vagrant species are virtually as numerous as Pied-billed Grebes. We can attribute this to the cold weather and the solidity of the ponds, which pushed the northernmost wintering Pied-bills farther south than usual.

Two thousand Northern Gannets off Nantucket January 13 was a good count for the period. Three American Bitterns in a very cold January, two on the North Shore, were likewise impressive if only for their lack of judgment. Not surprisingly, all were coastal. Not so Great

Blue Herons: two tried to tough it out in western Massachusetts, where, as Seth Kellogg reports, "the snow was deep, and the ice was thick." Turkey Vultures likewise are learning to deal with (sometimes) tough New England winters and are becoming routine.

Four **Greater White-fronted Geese** of the Greenland race spent the period from January 26 on in Fairhaven. Since January 2000 there have been regular winter reports of one or two Greater White-fronted Geese from Fairhaven and neighboring Rochester, and last fall there was a sighting of a family group, possibly including the same individuals reported this period. Mute Swans chose a strange time to pick up the pace in the Connecticut Valley, but as many as 24 were at Turners Falls, some at least into early February, the highest western count ever. The competition for space must be getting intense along the coast. The severe weather did not prevent a variety of ducks from attempting to winter in western valleys either, especially Common Goldeneyes and Hooded Mergansers. The most remarkable waterfowl in western Massachusetts this period were two Lesser Scaup (only 15 records since 1978), a Black Scoter in Greenfield (first western January record), and a Long-tailed Duck at Turners Falls (only the fifth ever in the western counties).

Ducks that prefer to winter in freshwater ponds were most numerous in the southeastern counties, where the warmer temperatures mean more open water. Up to 400 Hooded Mergansers in Falmouth and 194 Northern Pintails in Westport, both in January, were good examples. Two notable exceptions were Gadwalls and Ruddy Ducks. Gadwalls, which are most common as breeding birds in Essex County, seem to prefer to winter there too: in most recent winters the highest counts have come from East Gloucester and Newburyport harbor. Ruddy Ducks have historically wintered on inland ponds, but in the last few winters (not just this severe one), flocks in the dozens have wintered in open salt water from Nahant to Marblehead.

Among the rarer ducks, four Eurasian Wigeons and a single male "**Eurasian**" **Green-winged Teal** were typical numbers. Redheads were reported only from Nantucket, which usually has the highest counts, but not the only ones. **Tufted Ducks** were found in West Boylston and Acoaxet (both returning from previous winters) and Edgartown. King Eiders were scarce, with only three singles reported. Harlequin Ducks, although not rare, continue to gradually increase each winter at Rockport, with 104 counted in January. Such totals are a recent phenomenon: the highest count as of Veit and Petersen's *Birds of Massachusetts* (1993) was 35 off Martha's Vineyard in 1941. Barrow's Goldeneyes in ones and twos were all up and down the coast.

In the big numbers department, 100,000 Common Eiders were estimated off Wasque Point on the Vineyard in late February, but no comparable counts of the huge Long-tailed Duck flights among the islands were received during the period.

Bald Eagles were seen all over the state, with the largest numbers reported along the Merrimack River from Lawrence to Newburyport. A check of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife website showed 19 reported from Quabbin Reservoir, 7 along the Connecticut River, and 12 along the Merrimack January 10 on the annual eagle survey, but birders reported very few at Quabbin thereafter. Perhaps the ice forced them to scatter, as frequent reports from the Connecticut Valley indicate. A **Golden Eagle** at Quabbin on the survey was the only one reported during the period.

It was a good year for Rough-legs, with reports from all over the state and maxima of nine in Marshfield and eight on Plum Island. The famous South Boston **Gyr Falcon** returned for another winter and another show for birders. Reports of Merlins and Peregrines exceeded those of American Kestrels, indicating that kestrels are still way down from earlier years.

Ruffed Grouse were unreported east of Worcester County, and one wonders whether they are disappearing, or birders are simply not finding them. At least one flock of Northern Bobwhites was hanging on in Wellfleet. Who would have thought two decades ago that Wild Turkeys would soon appear to outnumber all other gallinaceous birds combined? American Coots were understandably down from recent winters with all the ice, while all other marsh birds were unreported except for a single Virginia Rail in Topsfield.

Not unexpectedly, the greatest wintering shorebird concentrations were on Cape Cod and the South Shore, though the highest count of Sanderlings came from Nahant, with 750 January 6. Ruddy Turnstones were also reported in higher-than-normal numbers north of Boston, with up to 16 in Rockport through most of the period. Western Massachusetts anomalies were a Greater Yellowlegs in Sheffield January 1 (the previous late date was November 26), an American Woodcock in Agawam on Groundhog Day, and a Killdeer pushing the envelope at Turners Falls February 22. Top billing goes to a **Western Sandpiper** on South Beach in Chatham January 6, presumably one of three found on the CBC a little earlier. This is the second in the last three Januarys from that location.

There are only four previous records for Pomarine Jaeger in January, all singles, and three of these in the past four years. Eleven Pomarines on Cape Cod January 4 were an impressive escalation in scale. A “**yellow-legged**” gull was reported from Salisbury February 19, too far away for the observer to attempt identification, but the options are complex, as described in Rick Heil’s notes in the June 2001 issue (*Bird Observer* 29 (3): 235). That same summary discusses the decline of Iceland Gulls on the North Shore since the 1980s, although the numbers there seem to have bounced back a bit this year. Several also wintered in the Connecticut Valley, as did two or three Glaucous Gulls.

A **Forster’s Tern** was very late at Woods Hole January 6-11, one of few January records ever in the state. Thirty-nine Common Murres off Andrews Point in Rockport January 3 reflected the phenomenal December flight at the same location, and 790 Razorbills there the same day were the highest count for the period in the state. The bird of the season was a probable **Long-billed Murrelet**, also at Andrews Point January 3. Details are before the MARC for consideration. This would be only a second state record, the first being a dead Marbled Murrelet of the (then) subspecies *perdix*, which was collected by a cat in inland Middleboro in September 1982.

J. Berry

Red-throated Loon				Horned Grebe			
1/4 Eastham (F.E.)	3	M. Faherty#		1/5 Salisbury	17	P + F. Vale	
1/5 Gloucester	3	P + F. Vale		1/5 Ipswich	25	P + F. Vale	
1/25 Eastham	135	J. Trimble#		1/12 Swansea/Somerset	60	M. Lynch#	
2/16 Boston H.	13	TASL (M. Hall)		1/19, 2/16 Boston H.	80, 37	TASL (M. Hall)	
2/21 Salisbury	4	M. Mitchell		2/9 Westport	12	M. Lynch#	
2/26 Nahant/Lynn	4	R. Heil		2/10 Sandwich	9	J. Kricher	
2/27 Cape Ann	3	R. Heil		2/19 Newbypt/P.I.	28	R. Heil	
Pacific Loon *				2/26 Nahant/Lynn	67	R. Heil	
1/4-5 Woods Hole	1	G. Gove#		2/27 Cape Ann	74	R. Heil	
2/27 Gloucester	1 ad	R. Heil		Red-necked Grebe			
Common Loon				1/1 Scituate	39	G. d’Entremont	
1/1 W. Boylston	4	P. Meleski		1/1, 2/27 Cape Ann	27, 23	R. Heil	
1/5 Newbypt	30	BBC (S. Grinley)		1/19 Boston H.	9	TASL (M. Hall)	
1/5 Ipswich	76	P + F. Vale		1/25 Eastham	5	J. Trimble#	
1/5 Westport	24	M. Lynch#		2/19 Newbypt/P.I.	3	R. Heil	
1/5 Gloucester	13	P + F. Vale		2/26 Nahant/Lynn	9	R. Heil	
1/7 Sandwich	22	J. Kricher		Eared Grebe *			
2/22 Salisbury	30	S. Grinley		thr Gloucester	1	v.o.	
2/26 Nahant/Lynn	28	R. Heil		Western Grebe *			
2/27 Cape Ann	117	R. Heil		1/1 Scituate	1	G. d’Entremont	
Pied-billed Grebe				1/2-20 Nahant	1	D. Wilkinson + v.o.	
1/1 Plymouth	1	G. d’Entremont		Northern Gannet			
1/5 Arlington	1	M. Rines		1/3, 2/17 Rockport (A.P.)	41, 2	R. Heil	
2/25 W. Harwich	1	D. Silverstein#		1/4, 2/17 P’town (R.P.)	30, 55	Dorsey, Nikula	
				1/4 Eastham (F.E.)	210	M. Faherty#	

Northern Gannet (continued)				1/3	Osterville	30	G. Gove#
1/5	Wellfleet	70	J. Hoye#	1/3	Bourne	14	J. Kricher
1/13	Nantucket	2000	E. Ray	1/12	Swansea/Somerset	174	M. Lynch#
Great Cormorant				1/29	Sandwich	17	T. Prince
1/1	N. Scituate	72	G. d'Entremont	2/8	Springfield	1	C. Gentes
1/1	Cape Ann	530	R. Heil	2/8	E. Gloucester	20	J. Berry#
1/5, 2/9	Acoaxet	23, 25	M. Lynch#	2/15	Sandwich	8	G. Hirth
1/11	P'town (R.P.)	525	W. Petersen#	2/22	Salisbury	16	M. + J. Halloran
1/25	Lawrence	43	J. Hogan	2/27	Gloucester	44	R. Heil
2/18	Amesbury	60	E. Johnson	Eurasian Wigeon			
2/27	Cape Ann	108	R. Heil	1/3, 2/21	Osterville	1	G. Gove#
American Bittern				1/12	Swansea/Somerset	2	M. Lynch#
1/1	P.I.	1	J. Hoye#	2/2	Falmouth	1	G. Gove#
1/19	Salisbury	1	B. Stevens#	American Wigeon			
1/20	W. Barnstable	1	G. Gove	1/1	Belmont	3 m	M. Rines
Great Blue Heron				1/1	Northboro	4	M. Lynch#
1/5	Boston	4	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/3	Osterville	80	G. Gove#
1/5	Winchester	5	B. Kernan	1/3	Bourne	4	J. Kricher
1/11	Amherst	1	S. Hillborn	1/4	W. Barnstable	30	C. Dorsey
1/12	Westport	9	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/5	Acoaxet	11	M. Lynch#
2/8	Ludlow	1	C. Gentes	1/12	Brookline	4	K. Lewis#
2/10	Sandwich	5	J. Kricher	1/12	Swansea/Somerset	785	M. Lynch#
Black-crowned Night-Heron				1/26	Northbridge	2 m	M. Lynch#
1/12	Boston	4	M. Verdoes	2/16	Newbypt	7	T. Wetmore
1/18	Newbypt	1 imm	T. Wetmore#	2/23	Medford	2	R. LaFontaine
1/19	Winthrop	9	TASL (P. + F. Vale#)	American Black Duck			
1/25	Hyannis	1 imm	B. Nikula	1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	600+	P. Flood
2/6	Mashpee	1	G. Gove#	1/8	Newbypt/P.I.	1300+	R. Heil
2/19	W. Tisbury	1	K. + T. Branhall	1/19, 2/16	Boston H.	1123, 480	TASL (M. Hall)
Turkey Vulture				Northern Shoveler			
1/5	Westfield	2	J. Hutchison	1/1	Arlington	9	M. Rines#
1/7	Mashpee	6	M. Keleher	1/5	Newbypt	1 f	J. Offermann
1/12	Westport	8	BBC (R. Stymeist)	2/22	Millbury	1 f	M. Lynch#
2/thr	Tisbury	7	v.o.	Northern Pintail			
2/2	Montague	2	P. Serrentino	1/1	Uxbridge	2	M. Lynch#
2/8	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore	1/1	Northboro	2 m	M. Lynch#
2/23	Nantucket	2	J. Manley	1/2	Turners Falls	2	R. Packard
2/26	Ipswich	2	E. Johnson	1/5	P.I.	2	T. Martin
Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose				1/8	Gloucester	2	MAS (N. Soulette)
1/26-2/28	Fairhaven	4	G. Mock + v.o.	1/11, 2/15	Marlborough	5, 2	E. Taylor
Snow Goose				1/12	Westport	194	BBC (R. Stymeist)
1/thr	Newbypt	4	R. Heil	1/23-2/24	Amherst	2	H. Allen
1/12	Swansea/Somerset	1	M. Lynch#	1/26	Northbridge	2 m	M. Lynch#
1/17	Mendon	1	C. Ezell	2/27	Gloucester	2	R. Heil
1/18	Hingham	4	C. Nims#	Green-winged Teal			
1/19	Orleans	1	C. Thompson	1/1	Scituate	12	G. d'Entremont
2/1	Hingham	4	G. d'Entremont	1/1	Bourne	2	J. Kricher
2/1	P.I.	3	P. McFarland	1/11	Eastham	12	W. Petersen#
2/6-9	Newbypt	3	T. Wetmore	1/18	Cambridge	8	M. Rines
Canada Goose				1/25	Sandwich	27	J. Trimble#
1/19, 2/16	Boston H.	558, 402	TASL (M. Hall)	1/26	Belmont	3 pr	K. Hartel
2/9	Westport	1830	M. Lynch#	1/26	Newbypt	1	MAS (J. Liller)
2/9	Acoaxet	1362	M. Lynch#	2/19	Salisbury	3	M. Mitchell
Brant				Eurasian Teal			
1/4	Eastham (F.E.)	270	M. Faherty#	1/11	Eastham	1 m	W. Petersen#
1/4	Swansea	800+	J. Sweeney	Canvasback			
1/11	Nahant	70+	M. Lynch#	thr	Falmouth	31	G. Gove#
1/12	Swansea/Somerset	1564	M. Lynch#	1/5, 2/9	Acoaxet	43, 139	M. Lynch#
1/18	N. Scituate	30+	C. Nims#	1/9	Plymouth	1	R. Titus
1/19, 2/16	Boston H.	423, 72	TASL (M. Hall)	1/12	Swansea/Somerset	4	M. Lynch#
1/25	Buzzard's Bay	800	G. Gove#	1/12	Westport	64	BBC (R. Stymeist)
1/25	Barnstable H.	225	J. Trimble#	1/18	Edgartown	35	A. Keith
2/16	Sandwich	70	CCBC (E. Winslow)	1/26	Nantucket	8	E. Ray
2/26	Nahant/Lynn	145	R. Heil	2/12	Cotuit	9 m, 2 f	E. Foster
Mute Swan				2/23	Gloucester	2 m, 2 f	S. Mirick#
1/1-2/10	Turners Falls	15-24	v.o.	Redhead			
1/4	W. Barnstable	10	C. Dorsey	1/13	Nantucket	6	E. Ray
2/5	Holyoke	7	H. Allen	Ring-necked Duck			
2/16	Westport	95	G. d'Entremont	1/6	Arlington	10	M. Rines
Wood Duck				1/6	Edgartown	13	A. Keith
1/2, 2/2	Springfield	2, 2	G. Kingston	1/8	Brocton	19	M. Faherty
1/11	Plymouth	pr	G. d'Entremont	1/25	Brookline	1 m	A. Joslin
1/28	S. Hadley	2	H. Allen	1/29	Sandwich	12	T. Prince
2/23	Medford	3	R. LaFontaine	1/31	E. Sandwich	35	D. Manchester
2/24	Springfield	2	R. Packard#	2/8	Natick	4	E. Taylor
Gadwall				2/20	P.I.	1	M. Halloran
1/1	P.I.	27	BBC (L. de la Flor)	2/25	W. Harwich	3	D. Silverstein#
1/1	Plymouth	4	G. d'Entremont				

Tufted Duck	1/1	W. Boylston	1 m	S. Spangenberg#	1/6	Nahant	530		R. Heil
	1/5, 2/9	Acoaxet	1 f	M. Lynch#	1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	210		P. Flood
	1/5-7	Edgartown	1 m	A. Keith# + v.o.	1/19, 2/16	Boston H.	1488, 1433	TASL	(M. Hall)
Greater Scaup					1/25	Nantucket	620		E. Ray
thr		Nahant	110	L. Pivacek#	2/26	Nahant/Lynn	450		R. Heil
thr		Turners Falls	1-2	v.o.	2/27	Cape Ann	180		R. Heil
1/1		W. Boylston	46	P. Meleski	Common Goldeneye				
1/4		Swansea	400+	J. Sweeney	1/1 2/27	Cape Ann	170, 145		R. Heil
1/4		Swampscott	40	L. de la Flor#	1/1	Holyoke	31		T. Gagnon
1/6		Falmouth	970	G. Gove#	1/1	W. Boylston	48		P. Meleski
1/12		Westport	195	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/5, 2/9	Westport	158, 173		M. Lynch#
1/19, 2/16		Boston H.	2405, 806	TASL (M. Hall)	1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	65		P. Flood
2/1		Newbypt	9	T. Wetmore	1/19, 2/16	Boston H.	953, 1209	TASL	(M. Hall)
2/16		Fairhaven	600	G. d'Entremont	1/30	Newbypt	220		R. Heil
2/27		Gloucester	17	R. Heil	2/5	Agawam	12		S. Kellogg
Lesser Scaup					2/10	Newbypt	150		T. Wetmore
thr		Nahant	80	L. Pivacek#	2/10	Sandwich	85		J. Kricher
1/5, 2/9		Acoaxet	87, 91	M. Lynch#	2/16	Falmouth	155		G. Gove#
1/6		Falmouth	100	G. Gove#	2/16	Fairhaven	100		G. d'Entremont
2/4		Lakeville	11	K. Anderson#	2/26	Nahant/Lynn	100		R. Heil
2/5		Agawam	2	S. Kellogg	Barrow's Goldeneye				
Scaup species					thr	Ipswich	2 m		J. Berry
1/6		Falmouth	970	G. Gove#	thr	Falmouth	1-2		G. Gove#
1/6		Swampscott	540	R. Heil	thr	Gloucester	1 m		v.o.
2/26		Nahant/Lynn	280	R. Heil	1/thr	P.I.	1-2		v.o.
King Eider					1/1	Rockport	1 m		R. Heil
thr		Gloucester	1 m	v.o.	1/5	Westport	1 m		M. Lynch#
1/1-6		Woods Hole	1	G. Gove#	1/5	Cotuit	1 m		S. Moore#
2/27		Magnolia	1 ad m	R. Heil	1/11	Scituate	1 m		C. Nims
Common Eider					1/11-22	Nahant	2		L. Pivacek#
1/9		Falmouth	200+	R. Titus	1/12	S. Boston	1		J. Young
1/19, 2/16		Boston H.	6692, 6535	TASL (M. Hall)	1/18	N. Scituate	1 m		C. Nims#
1/20		Fairhaven	350+	J. Sweeney	1/25	Plymouth H.	1		K. Holmes
1/25		Barnstable H.	4700	J. Trimble#	1/29	Barnstable (S.N.)	1 m		T. Prince
2/10		Sandwich	350	J. Kricher	2/15	Cotuit	1 m		C. Buelow
2/14		Nahant	915	L. Pivacek	2/16	Fairhaven	1 f		G. d'Entremont
2/15-28		Wasque Pt. M.V.	100,000	V. Laux	2/21	Newbury	1 f		M. + J. Halloran
2/23		Salisbury	435	D. Chickering	Hooded Merganser				
2/27		Cape Ann	1100	R. Heil	1/thr	Falmouth	200-400		G. Gove
Harlequin Duck					1/1	W. Boylston	97		P. Meleski
1/thr		Rockport	104 max	J. Berry	1/1	Plymouth	30		G. d'Entremont
1/4		Eastham (F.E.)	3	M. Faherty#	1/5	Lawrence	22		J. Hogan
1/7, 2/10		Sandwich	3	J. Kricher	1/6, 2/24	Arlington	12, 1		M. Rines
1/11		Scituate	12	C. Nims	1/7	Newbypt	15		B. Krisler
2/27		Rockport	94	R. Heil	1/12	Swansea/Somerset	84		M. Lynch#
Surf Scoter					1/25	Eastham	15		J. Trimble#
1/5		Westport	17	M. Lynch#	2/5	Agawam	18		S. Kellogg
1/19, 2/16		Boston H.	897, 225	TASL (M. Hall)	2/21	Newbury	5		M. + J. Halloran
1/20		Fairhaven	450+	J. Sweeney	2/24	Marston Mills	15		M. Keleher
2/26		Nahant/Lynn	320	R. Heil	Red-breasted Merganser				
2/27		Cape Ann	28	R. Heil	1/1, 2/27	Cape Ann	460, 240		R. Heil
White-winged Scoter					1/5, 2/9	Acoaxet	129, 84		M. Lynch#
1/6		Nahant	600	R. Heil	1/19, 2/16	Boston H.	635, 413		TASL (M. Hall)
1/19, 2/16		Boston H.	958, 1196	TASL (M. Hall)	1/28	Arlington	6		M. Rines
1/20		Fairhaven	300+	J. Sweeney	2/9	Westport	153		M. Lynch#
2/24		P.I.	100	T. Wetmore	2/22	Salisbury	50		M. + J. Halloran
2/26		Nahant/Lynn	1260	R. Heil	2/26	Nahant/Lynn	60		R. Heil
2/27		Cape Ann	220	R. Heil	Common Merganser				
Black Scoter					1/1	W. Boylston	105		P. Meleski
1/1		Scituate	9	G. d'Entremont	1/1	Plymouth	20		G. d'Entremont
1/6		Chatham (S.B.)	30	P. Flood	1/3	W. Roxbury	22		A. Joslin
1/9		Greenfield	1	H. Lappen	1/10, 2/4	Lakeville	65, 23		K. Anderson
1/19, 2/16		Boston H.	37, 75	TASL (M. Hall)	1/11	Wachusett Res.	38		M. Lynch#
1/20		Fairhaven	100+	J. Sweeney	1/12	Westport	190+ BBC		(R. Stymeist)
2/19		Rockport	32	J. Berry	1/13, 2/24	Arlington	21, 22		M. Rines
2/24		P.I.	30	T. Wetmore	2/2	Haverhill	54		R. Heil
2/26		Nahant/Lynn	12	R. Heil	2/2	Newbypt	22		R. Heil
Long-tailed Duck					2/2	W. Newbury	50		R. Heil
1/4		Eastham (F.E.)	16	M. Faherty#	2/9	Belmont	28		K. Hartel
1/5		Ipswich	10	P. + F. Vale	2/16	Amesbury	40		T. Wetmore
1/9		Turners Falls	1	W. Lafley	2/20	Salisbury	25+		S. Hedman
2/9		Woods Hole	30	R. Vander Pyl#	2/27	Holyoke	11		W. Lafley
2/16		Ipswich	36	P. + F. Vale	Ruddy Duck				
2/19		Newbypt/P.I.	50	R. Heil	thr	Nahant	97 max		L. Pivacek#
2/27		Cape Ann	13	R. Heil	1/6	Swampscott	63		R. Heil
Bufflehead					1/11	Lynnway	60+		M. Lynch#
1/5, 2/9		Acoaxet	453, 686	M. Lynch#	1/13	Arlington	7		M. Rines
					1/25	Brookline	3		A. Joslin

Bald Eagle				2/19	Springfield	2	T. Tynan
thr	Arlington	2 4W	M. Rines#	2/24	Amherst	2	W. Lafley
thr	Newbypt	6 max	v.o.	2/24	Salisbury	2	T. Wetmore
1/25	Lakeville	4 ad, 1 imm	K. Holmes	thr	Reports of indiv.	From 17 locations	
2/2	Haverhill	5	R. Heil	Gyr Falcon			
2/2	Lawrence	7	R. Heil	thr	S. Boston/Logan	1	v.o.
2/9	Acoaxet	2 ad	M. Lynch#	Ruffed Grouse			
2/11	W. Newbury	2 ad, 1 2W	S. McGrath	1/2	Westboro	1	C. Buelow
2/19	Amesbury	9	M. + J. Halloran	1/13	Shelburne	1	R. Stymeist#
2/21	Quabbin Park	2	O. Spalding#	2/2	W. Boylston	1	S. Sutton
Northern Harrier				2/13	Quabbin (G40)	4	C. Buelow
1/thr	DWWS	9 max	1/28D. Furbish	Wild Turkey			
1/1, 2/10	P.I.	8, 6	T. Wetmore#	thr	Brimfield	36-39	I. Lynch#
1/4	Barnstable (S.N.)	5	J. Hoye#	1/10	Concord	14	D. + I. Jewell
1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	2	P. Flood	1/11	Shelburne	14	T. Gagnon#
1/9	W. Bridgewater	3	M. Faherty	1/24	Rowley	24	J. Berry#
1/10	Rowley/P.I.	10	J. Berry	1/25	Bridgewater	12	K. Holmes
1/12	Westport	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/31	E. Middleboro	12	K. Anderson
1/12, 2/8	Cumb. Farms	9, 4	J. Sweeney	2/1	Grafton	28	M. Lynch#
1/20	S. Dart (A. Pd)	2	J. Sweeney	2/2	Haverhill	14	R. Heil
1/25	Eastham	3	J. Trimble#	2/26	Hampton	32	F. Gardner
2/1	Salisbury	5	P. + F. Vale	Northern Bobwhite			
Sharp-shinned Hawk				1/6	Wellfleet	12BBC (D. Wilkinson)	
1/5	Wareham	2	K. Anderson#	1/26	Falmouth	1	M. Keleher
1/5	Bourne	2	K. Anderson#	Virginia Rail			
1/12	Cape Ann	2	BBC (D. Peloquin)	1/2	IRWS	1	J. MacDougall
1/12	Westport	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)	American Coot			
2/9	Acoaxet	2	M. Lynch#	thr	Woburn	6-7	M. Rines
thr	Reports of indiv.	From 30 locations		thr	Lynn	3	R. Heil
Cooper's Hawk				1/1	Plymouth	10	G. d'Entremont
2/8	Newbypt	2 ad	P. Roberts#	1/4	Swansea	2	J. Sweeney
2/13	Newbury	2	T. Wetmore#	1/6	Arlington	7	M. Rines
2/15	Nahant	2	L. Pivacek#	1/23	Newbypt	1	L. Pivacek
2/thr	DWWS	2	D. Furbish#	2/9	Acoaxet	1	M. Lynch#
thr	Reports of indiv.	From 42 locations		2/23	Medford	7	R. LaFontaine
Northern Goshawk				Black-bellied Plover			
1/11	Lenox	1	R. Wheeler	1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	17	P. Flood
1/16	Brookline	1 ad	H. Wiggan	1/7, 2/10	Sandwich	2, 5	J. Kricher
1/26, 2/18	Groveland	1	D. Chickering	Killdeer			
2/2	W. Newbury	1 ad	R. Heil	1/9	Plymouth	1	R. Titus
Red-shouldered Hawk				1/16	West Tisbury	1	C. Jones
thr	Reports of indiv.	From 23 locations		2/2	Fairhaven	2	G. d'Entremont
Red-tailed Hawk				2/22	Turners Falls	1	S. Sumner
1/12	Westport	10	BBC (R. Stymeist)	Greater Yellowlegs			
1/19	Boston H.	11	TASL (M. Hall)	1/1	Sheffield	1	W. Cook
Rough-legged Hawk				1/5	Acoaxet	1	M. Lynch#
thr	P.I.	4-8	v.o.	Ruddy Turnstone			
thr	DWWS	7-9	D. Furbish	1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	1	P. Flood
1/1	Cape Ann	2 lt imm	R. Heil	1/7, 26	Sandwich	14, 17	J. Kricher
1/4	Woods Hole	1	G. Gove#	1/8	Gloucester (B.R.)	5	MAS (N. Soulette)
1/4	Barnstable (S.N.)	1	J. Hoye#	1/11, 2/12	Rockport	16, 7	Taylor, Weeks
1/5	Acoaxet	1 lt	M. Lynch#	1/18	N. Scituate	1	C. Nims#
1/8, 2/8	Hadley	1	Yeskie, Ziomek	1/19	P'town	2	R. Packard#
1/9, 2/9	Cumb. Farms	3 lt, 2 lt	Faherty, Rodman	1/20	Fairhaven	16	J. Sweeney
1/9	W. Bridgewater	1 imm lt	M. Faherty	1/26	Oak Bluffs	1	T. Raymond#
1/13	Windsor	1 m dk	T. Collins#	1/30	Nantucket	20	E. Ray
1/14	Chilmark	1	A. Keith	2/27	Magnolia	2	R. Heil
1/21	Rowley	3	S. McGrath	Red Knot			
1/25	Egremont	1	T. Collins	1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	22	P. Flood
2/9	Millbury	1 dk	M. Lynch#	Sanderling			
2/9	Nantucket	1	B. Kennedy	1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	165	P. Flood
Golden Eagle				1/6	Nahant	750	R. Heil
1/10	E. Quabbin	1	fide MassWildlife	1/6	Salisbury	20	J. Berry
American Kestrel				1/7	P.I.	12	T. Wetmore
thr	Reports of indiv.	From 16 locations		1/19, 2/16	Boston H.	91, 1	TASL (M. Hall)
Merlin				2/8	Rockport (A.P.)	15	P. + F. Vale
1/1	Arlington	3	J. Sutherland	2/15	Falmouth	15	G. Hirth
1/3	P.I.	2	M. Tingley	2/26	Nahant/Lynn	300	R. Heil
1/5	Boston	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)	Western Sandpiper			
1/31	Salisbury B.	2	F. Gardner	1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	1	P. Flood
1/31	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore	Purple Sandpiper			
2/8	Newbypt	2	BBC (S. Hunt)	1/2, 2/14	Nahant	130, 87	Martin, Pivacek
thr	Reports of indiv.	From 18 locations		1/5, 2/12	Scituate	398, 250	Giles, Petersen
Peregrine Falcon				1/5	Salisbury	19	D. Chickering
1/thr	Lawrence	pr	J. Hogan	1/8	Sandwich	4	G. Gove#
1/11	Boston	2	T. Nickerson#	1/8, 2/21	Gloucester	200, 30	Soulette, Hedman
1/12	Lowell	2 ad	J. Hogan	1/15, 2/8	Rockport	60, 105	Berry, Vale
2/6	Worcester	pr	M. Lynch#	1/18	N. Scituate	200	C. Nims#

Purple Sandpiper (cont.)				2/19	Newbypt/PI.	12		R. Heil
1/19	Plymouth	25	T. Prince#	2/26	Nahant/Lynn	3		R. Heil
1/19	Boston H.	137	TASL (M. Hall)	2/27	Gloucester	4		R. Heil
1/20	Fairhaven	8	J. Sweeney		Lesser Black-backed Gull			
Dunlin				1/1-2/9	Boston	1 ad		v.o.
1/5	Acoaxet	170+	M. Lynch#	1/9	Plymouth	1 3W, 1 2W		R. Titus
1/6, 2/26	Nahant	180, 35	R. Heil	1/30, 2/22	Newbypt	1		Heil, Chickering
1/6	Chatham (S.B.)	600+	P. Flood	1/31	Nantucket	21		R. Kennedy
1/7, 2/10	Sandwich	28, 29	J. Kricher	2/16	Westport	1 ad		G. d'Entremont
1/7, 2/8	PI.	25, 42	Wetmore, Hunt	2/19	Salisbury	1 4W		R. Heil
1/11	Eastham	200	W. Petersen#	2/26	Nahant	1 ad		R. Heil
1/14	Scituate	61	P. O'Neill		Glaucous Gull			
1/17	Ipswich (C.B.)	185	J. Berry#	1/1-2/5	Agawam	1		S. Kellogg
1/19	Boston H.	26	TASL (M. Hall)	1/16	Salisbury	1		J. Nelson
1/20	Fairhaven	75	J. Sweeney	1/30, 2/22	Northampton	1		T. Gagnon
1/25	Newbypt	25	D. Chickering	2/6	Gloucester	1 2W		C. Petrak#
2/16	Salisbury	3	B. Krisler	2/27	Springfield	1		W. Lafley
Wilson's Snipe					Nelson's Gull			
1/1	Ipswich	1	J. Berry	1/1-19	Plymouth	1 2W		G. d'Entremont + v.o.
1/5	Bourne	4	K. Anderson#		Black-legged Kittiwake			
1/7	Arlington	1	A. Piccolo	1/1	N. Truro	70		B. Nikula
1/8	Newbypt	8	R. Heil	1/2, 2/17	Rockport (A.P.)	120, 15		R. Heil
1/25	Sandwich	10	J. Trimble#	1/4	Woods Hole	5		G. Gove#
1/25	E. Orleans	4	J. Trimble#	1/4	Eastham (F.E.)	720		M. Faherty#
1/28	Edgartown	1	W. Bailey	1/4	Dennis (Corp.B.)	540		B. Nikula#
2/9	Oak Bluffs	1	N. Weaver	1/19, 2/17	P'town (R.P.)	40, 22		B. Nikula#
American Woodcock					Forster's Tern			
2/2	Agawam	1	J. Hoye#	1/6-11	Woods Hole	1		J. Kricher + v.o.
2/3	N. Medfield	1	E. Morrier		Dovekie			
Pomarine Jaeger				1/2	Rockport (A.P.)	1		R. Heil
1/4	Dennis (Corp.B.)	1	B. Nikula#	1/5	P'town (R.P.)	20		J. Hoye#
1/4	Eastham (F.E.)	10	B. Nikula#		Common Murre			
Little Gull				1/3, 2/17	Rockport (A.P.)	39, 1		R. Heil
1/4	Dennis (Corp.B.)	1 ad	B. Nikula	2/9	Woods Hole	1		R. Vander Pyl#
1/13	Nantucket	5	E. Ray		Thick-billed Murre			
Black-headed Gull				1/3, 2/17	Rockport (A.P.)	3, 1		R. Heil
1/3	Osterville	1	G. Gove#		Razorbill			
1/6	Nahant	2	R. Heil	1/1	PI.	90		T. Wetmore
2/14	Plymouth	1 ad	D. Furbish#	1/3, 2/17	Rockport (A.P.)	790, 32		R. Heil
2/16	Nantucket	1	F. Gallo	1/4, 1/25	Eastham	120, 260		Faherty, Trimble
2/22	Beverly H.	1 ad	R. Buchsbaum	1/4	Woods Hole	10		G. Gove#
Bonaparte's Gull				1/5	Wellfleet	72		J. Hoye#
1/2	Rockport (A.P.)	42	R. Heil	1/5	Barnstable (S.N.)	1		S. Moore#
1/4	Dennis (Corp.B.)	260	B. Nikula#	1/19, 2/22	P'town (R.P.)	200, 80		B. Nikula#
1/6	Nahant	2200	R. Heil	2/9	Acoaxet	1		M. Lynch#
1/13, 2/3	Nantucket	2500, 600	E. Ray		Black Guillemot			
"yellow-legged" gull				1/1	Scituate	2		G. d'Entremont
2/19	Salisbury	1 ad	R. Heil	1/1, 2/27	Cape Ann	73, 93		R. Heil
Iceland Gull				1/12	Nahant	4		L. Pivacek
1/1-2/5	Agawam	2-3	S. Kellogg	1/19	Boston H.	1		TASL (M. Hall)
1/1	Northampton	1	T. Gagnon	1/25	PI.	1		M. Lynch#
1/1-20	Oak Bluffs	2	A. Keith#		Long-billed Murrelet (details submitted) *			
1/2, 2/17	Rockport (A.P.)	3, 1	R. Heil	1/3	Rockport (A.P.)	1		R. Heil
1/5	Hull	1 1W	C. Dalton		Large alcid species			
1/5	Salisbury	3 ad	P. + F. Vale	1/1	N. Truro	260		B. Nikula
1/10	Barre	1 1W	C. Buelow	1/2	Rockport (A.P.)	470		R. Heil
1/11-2/11	Turners Falls	2	v.o.	1/19, 2/17	P'town (R.P.)	220, 275		B. Nikula#
1/19, 2/22	P'town (R.P.)	2, 5	B. Nikula#	1/25	Eastham	600+		J. Trimble#
1/31, 2/24	Nantucket	38, 23	Kennedy, Ray					

PARAKEETS THROUGH FINCHES

A sad casualty of the severe winter was the crash of the Barn Owl population on Martha's Vineyard. Gus Ben David, the director of the Felix Neck Mass Audubon Sanctuary, reported that 11 dead Barn Owls were brought to the sanctuary. The unusual snow depth on the Vineyard made it difficult, if not impossible, for the owls to find their primary food source, white-footed mice. It took over a decade for the owls to re-establish themselves on the Vineyard after the severe winter of 1960-1961, and it is feared that it may be many years again before the population reaches last year's numbers. Observers on Nantucket saw no evidence of a similar die-off, but the winter there was also severe, so an evaluation of the population will have to wait until owl boxes can be checked in the spring.

Short-eared Owls really were in evidence at Plum Island and in the Cumberland Farms fields with a maximum of 7 individuals noted from each location. Other owls such as Screech, Great Horned, Barred, and Saw-whet were reported in normal numbers. In recent years Daniel Webster Sanctuary in Marshfield has been a good overwintering spot for Long-eared Owls, with six to twelve reported, but no more than two individuals were reported this year. Other Long-ears were seen at Salisbury and on Plum Island during the period. For the last three years in a row, a Snowy Owl was found in western Massachusetts; prior to the Pittsfield bird there were no reports from 1993-2000.

A Red-headed Woodpecker at Turners Falls was the only one reported during the period. At least 15 sapsuckers were noted from a widespread area, continuing the trend in recent years of many wintering reports. There was no shortage of Northern Shrike reports during the period, and the West Nile Virus did not seem to have any effect on the various crow roosts in the state. As many as 60 Fish Crows could be found in Watertown, and over 50 were tallied from the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. Interesting was a report of crows roosting in a snow-covered field in Worcester, and even more interesting is that this field is partially lit at night. Some researchers have speculated that crows don't see well at night, and that roosting on snow could help reflect light and thus make the crows feel safe. Another theory is that the snow, especially if it's glazed over, would make it harder for predators to approach quietly. Over the past few years Common Ravens have been increasingly reported from nontraditional places, and during this period these included North Andover, Sturbridge, and Carlisle.

Some hardy Tree Swallows were noted from Falmouth and nearby Cotuit early in January. Red-breasted Nuthatches were few and far between, with mostly single birds noted. Carolina Wrens seemed to be holding on at least through early January, but fewer were noted during February, especially after all the heavy snow. A **Sedge Wren** was carefully described from the Acoaxet area of Westport at the end of January. Eastern Bluebirds and Hermit Thrushes were noted in impressive numbers throughout the state despite the weather, and large flocks of American Robins continued through January.

A Valentine's Day report of a surviving Orange-crowned Warbler was most reassuring given the cold and snowy winter. An impressive collection of sparrows was noted during the period. A Clay-colored Sparrow spent the period at the Bird Watchers' Supply and Gift in Newburyport – now that is an incentive to shop! Other Clay-colored Sparrows were noted from Arlington and the Cumberland Farm fields. Two Vesper Sparrows and a Grasshopper Sparrow in the southeastern part of the state were noteworthy, as was a Dickcissel in Bolton. A Blue Grosbeak in Chatham was only the second February record for this species in Massachusetts. Winter finches were virtually a no-show. Purple Finches have been very scarce in western Massachusetts three out of the last four years. For the first time ever not a single Evening Grosbeak was reported during the period in the western counties. Only two individual Pine Siskins were reported. One would think that with all this winter weather, we should have had a better showing of "winter" finches.

R. Stymeist

Monk Parakeet				1/1	Douglas	4	M. Lynch#
1/5	Somerset	5	M. Lynch#	1/4	N. Hadley	3	C. Gentes
2/5	Woods Hole	3	I. Valiela	1/11	Quincy	2	C. Dalton
Barn Owl				1/12	Topsfield	2	J. MacDougall#
2/9	Nantucket	1	B. Kennedy	1/26	Middleboro	2	K. Holmes
Eastern Screech-Owl				2/1	Mt.A.	2	M. Verdoes#
1/1	Ipswich	2	J. Berry	2/16	Ipswich	2	J. Berry
1/11	Middleboro	2	K. Holmes	Snowy Owl			
2/3	Winchester	2	M. Rines	thr	P.I.	1-3	v.o.
2/16	Beverly	2	P. Brown	thr	Boston (Logan)	1-2	N. Smith
thr	Reports of indiv. From 14 locations			1/7	Duxbury B.	1	D. Furbish
Great Horned Owl				1/23	Pittsfield	1	J. Areno
thr	DWWS	3-4	D. Furbish	1/25	Salisbury	1	P. + F. Vale
1/1	Sutton	3	M. Lynch#	2/3-06	Newbury	1 m	v.o.

Snowy Owl (cont.)				Eastern Phoebe		
2/26 Ipswich (C.B.)	1 f	E. Johnson	1/2 IRWS	1	J. MacDougall	
Barred Owl			1/7 GMNWR	1	J. Forbes	
1/1 Douglas	2	M. Lynch#	1/9 Tisbury	1	A. Keith#	
1/1 Sutton	1	M. Lynch#	1/13 Wayland	1	G. Long	
1/7 Wayland	1	G. Long	1/15 Chilmark	1	A. Keith	
1/24 Deerfield	1	R. Ranney	Northern Shrike			
2/1 Hamilton	1	BBC (J. Berry)	thr Lexington	1-2	M. Rines#	
2/4 Quabbin (G43)	3	C. Buelow	thr P.I.	1-2	T. Martin	
2/7 Ashfield	1	S. Sauter	1/1 Sheffield	1	R. Packard	
2/16 Ipswich	2	J. Berry	1/1 Ipswich	1	J. Berry	
2/22 Amesbury	pr	S. Grinley	1/11 N. Andover	1 ad	B. Drummond#	
Long-eared Owl			1/11, 20 Bolton Flats	1, 3	S. Sutton	
thr DWWS	1-2	D. Furbish#	1/12 Uxbridge	1	M. Lynch#	
1/6-2/15 P.I.	1	P. Brown + v.o.	1/17 Pepperell	1 imm	T. Pirro	
1/20-22 Salisbury	1	P. Brown + v.o.	1/19 Edgartown	1	V. Laux	
2/13 Essex	1-2	J. Berry#	1/25, 2/16 Worthington	1 ad	R. Packard#	
Short-eared Owl			1/27 Pelham	1	W. Lafley	
thr DWWS	2	D. Furbish	1/27 Chilmark	1	T. Rivers	
thr P.I.	4-6	v.o.	2/8 Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney	
1/5, 23 Nahant	1	L. Pivacek#	2/9 Newbypt	1 ad	J. Berry#	
1/11 P'town	1	W. Petersen#	2/16 Nahant	1	TASL (F. Vale)	
1/16 Salisbury	1	J. Nelson	2/28 Marshfield	1 imm	D. Furbish	
1/18, 2/8 Cumb. Farms	7	J. Sweeney	American Crow			
1/19 Duxbury B.	2	N. + J. Nickerson	1/6 Fitchburg	2000+	C. Caron	
1/20 Fairhaven	1	J. Sweeney	1/9 Lawrence	9000+	J. Hogan#	
2/14 Chatham	1	D. Silvestein	1/10 Brighton	4000+	A. Joslin	
2/17 Rowley	1	S. McGrath	1/25 Framingham	4300+	E. Taylor	
Northern Saw-whet Owl			2/3 Watertown	1000	D. Bates	
1/1 Douglas	1	M. Lynch#	2/8 Lawrence	2000+ABNC	(M. Taylor)	
1/1 Sutton	2	M. Lynch#	2/19 Worcester	1000+	M. Lynch#	
2/13 Brimfield	1	I. Lynch	2/22 Belmont	1175	B. Miller	
2/13 Essex	1	L. Cook	2/thr Framingham	4000+	E. Taylor	
2/19 Brimfield	1	I. Lynch	Fish Crow			
2/22 Concord	1	M. Maloney	1/thr Watertown	60 max	R. Stymeist	
Belted Kingfisher			1/1 Boston (A.A.)	50+	A. Joslin	
1/1 Arlington	2	M. Rines	1/1 Medford	12	M. Rines#	
1/1 Ipswich	2	J. Berry	1/5 Westport	3	M. Lynch#	
1/5 Bourne	3	K. Anderson#	1/10 Brookline	20	A. Joslin	
1/6 Newbypt	3	J. Berry	1/25, 2/21 Northampton	2	Gagnon, Lafley	
1/18 Cambridge	2	M. Rines	2/23 DWWS	2	D. Furbish	
Red-headed Woodpecker			Common Raven			
thr Turners Falls	1 imm	v.o.	1/1 Sturbridge	1	I. Lynch	
Red-bellied Woodpecker			1/5 N. Andover	2	J. Young	
1/1 N. Marshfield	3	G. d'Entremont	1/10 Barre	1	C. Buelow	
1/13 Wayland	4	G. Long	1/12 Quabbin (G40)	5	C. Buelow	
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			1/14, 2/3 Carlisle	1	T. Brownrigg	
1/thr Mt.A.	1-2	R. Stymeist#	1/15 Sunderland	1	R. Ranney	
1/thr M.V.	4 indiv.	fide A. Keith	1/16 Westminster	1	C. Caron	
1/1 Newbypt	1	P. + F. Vale	1/29 Erving	2	C. Buelow	
1/5 Westbypt	1	M. Lynch#	2/16 Chesterfield	1	R. Packard	
1/8-2/28 Springfield	1	J. Simpson	2/16 S. Quabbin	3	M. Lynch#	
1/19 Winchester	1	L. Kaplan	Horned Lark			
1/25 Truro	1	J. Young	thr P.I.	25-60	v.o.	
1/27 Stoneham	1	D. + I. Jewell	thr Salisbury	10-35	v.o.	
1/28 Pittsfield	1	S. Poulin	1/1 Concord	58	L. Nachtrab	
1/30 Fitchburg	1 imm	C. Caron	1/4 Eastham (F.E.)	25	M. Faherty#	
Hairy Woodpecker			1/5 Raynham	28	G. d'Entremont#	
1/thr Maynard	4	L. Nachtrab	1/5 Deerfield	65	S. Surner#	
1/thr Brimfield	3	I. Lynch#	1/11 P'town	28	W. Petersen#	
1/1 N. Marshfield	4	G. d'Entremont	1/20 Sheffield	100	C. Barrett	
1/13 Wayland	4	G. Long	1/25 Rockport	30	G. d'Entremont	
1/30 Quabbin (G40)	4	C. Buelow	1/25 Gr. Barrington	100	T. Collins	
Northern Flicker			2/2 Middleboro	200	J. Kricher	
1/1 N. Marshfield	6	G. d'Entremont	2/8 Rochester	100	M. LaBossiere	
1/5 Westport	3	M. Lynch#	2/16 Fairhaven	50	M. Maurer	
2/9 Acoaxet	6	M. Lynch#	2/21 Southwick	100	S. Kellogg	
2/25 Dennisport	3	D. Silverstein#	Tree Swallow			
Pileated Woodpecker			1/1-15 Falmouth	2-6	G. Gove	
1/5 Turners Falls	1	S. Surner#	1/3 Cotuit	2	G. Gove#	
1/9 Carlisle	1	T. Brownrigg	Red-breasted Nuthatch			
1/10 Brimfield	2	I. Lynch#	1/9 Plymouth	1	R. Titus	
1/18 Lexington	1	M. Rines	1/15, 2/24 Mashpee	2, 1	M. Keleher	
2/4 Quabbin (G43)	1	C. Buelow	1/17 Montague	1	C. Buelow	
2/6 Stoneham	1 m	D. + I. Jewell	1/18 W. Boylston	2	S. Sutton	
2/16 S. Quabbin	1	M. Lynch#	1/19 Royalston	2	M. Resch	
2/24 Springfield	1 m	R. Packard#	1/22 Pittsfield	1	T. Collins	
2/28 N. Andover	1	J. Berry#	1/24 Lincoln	1	M. Rines	

Red-breasted Nuthatch (continued)				Hermit Thrush			
1/29	Ipswich	1	J. Berry	1/5	Acoaxet	12	M. Lynch#
2/19	Quabbin (G43)	1	C. Buelow	1/5	Westport	12	M. Lynch#
Brown Creeper				2/8	Cumb. Farms	4	J. Sweeney
1/2	Brimfield	2	I. Lynch	2/9	Medford	2	M. Rines#
1/5	Taunton	2	G. d'Entremont#	2/14	Plymouth	2	MAS (D. Furbish)
1/13	Wayland	4	G. Long	thr	Reports of indiv.	From	23 locations
1/13	Quabbin (G43)	4	I. Lynch	American Robin			
1/16	Burlington	4	T. O'Connor#	1/thr	M.V.	500+	fide A. Keith
1/17	Montague	2	C. Buelow	1/1	Cape Ann	200	R. Heil
1/30	Mattapoisett	2	F. Smith	1/3	Westboro	286	C. Buelow
1/30	Quabbin (G40)	3	C. Buelow	1/5	Ipswich	142	BBC (J. Nove)
2/9	Medford	2	M. Rines#	1/6	P.I.	300	T. Wetmore
2/19	Petersham	2	C. Buelow	1/9	Fitchburg	113	C. Caron
3/7	Mashpee	2	M. Keleher	1/12	Westport	330	BBC (R. Stymeist)
Carolina Wren				1/19	Eastham	100+	B. Nikula#
1/1	Westboro	3+	S. Sutton	2/2	Fairhaven	180	G. d'Entremont
1/1	N. Marshfield	13	G. d'Entremont	2/16	Falmouth	1200	G. Gove#
1/5	Westport	25	M. Lynch#	2/18	Amesbury	100	E. Johnson
1/11	Lee	2	R. Stymeist#	2/23	Boston	150+	A. Joslin
1/12	Westport	22	BBC (R. Stymeist)	Gray Catbird			
1/12	Stockbridge	2	R. Stymeist#	1/thr	Agawam	1	S. Kellogg
1/12	Gr. Barrington	2	R. Stymeist#	1/1	Melrose	1	D. + I. Jewell
1/13	Richmond	2	R. Stymeist#	1/3	Westboro	1	C. Buelow
1/26	Northbridge	3	M. Lynch#	1/5	Westport	8	M. Lynch#
2/2	Fairhaven	7	G. d'Entremont	1/9	Saugus	1	D. + I. Jewell
2/22	Millbury	2	M. Lynch#	1/12	Freetown	1	J. Sweeney
Winter Wren				1/13-26	Wayland	1	G. Long
1/1	MNWS	1	K. Haley	1/19	Lincoln	1	N. Soulette
1/1	N. Marshfield	3	G. d'Entremont	1/25	Medford	1	A. Ankers#
1/1	New Marlboro	1	W. Cook	1/25	Barnstable	1	J. Trimble#
1/1	Woburn	1	M. Rines#	1/26	P.I.	1	P. Brown
1/2	Northampton	1	T. Gagnon	2/thr	Agawam	1	S. Kellogg
1/5	WBWS	1	J. Hoye#	2/13	Essex	1	J. Berry#
1/12	Westport	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)	2/22	Fairhaven	1	G. d'Entremont
1/12	Boxford (C.P.)	1	J. MacDougall#	Brown Thrasher			
1/24	Rowley	1	J. Berry#	1/5	Acoaxet	1	M. Lynch#
1/25	Sandwich	1	J. Trimble#	American Pipit			
1/26	Northbridge	1	M. Lynch#	1/23	P.I.	7	L. Pivacek
2/4	Winchester	1	M. Rines	2/16	Fairhaven	4	M. Maurer
2/9	Wayland	1	G. Long	Cedar Waxwing			
Sedge Wren				1/thr	M.V.	250+	fide A. Keith
1/27	Acoaxet	1	M. Boucher	1/11	Williamsburg	110	T. Gagnon
Marsh Wren				1/11	Turners Falls	250+	T. Gagnon#
1/12	Westport	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/14	Deerfield	125	S. Sauter
Golden-crowned Kinglet				1/16	Lincoln	100	W. Petersen
1/4	Brimfield	4	I. Lynch	Orange-crowned Warbler			
1/5	Westport	4	M. Lynch#	2/14	Marshfield	1	MAS (D. Furbish)
1/7	GMNWR	2	J. Forbes	Yellow-rumped Warbler			
1/15	Medfield	2	E. Morrier	1/thr	Westboro	2	S. Sutton
1/16	Burlington	3	T. O'Connor#	1/1	N. Marshfield	11	G. d'Entremont
2/13	Quabbin (G40)	2	C. Buelow	1/1	W. Boylston	1	P. Meleski
2/16	Ipswich	2	J. Berry	1/5	Westport	30	M. Lynch#
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				1/17	W. Gloucester	4	J. + M. Nelson
1/1	Bourne	1	J. Kricher	1/17	Ipswich (C.B.)	8	J. Berry#
1/12, 2/9	Westboro	1	S. Sutton	1/20	S. Dart (A. Pd)	6	J. Sweeney
1/14	Newbypt	1	T. Wetmore	1/20	Fairhaven	10	J. Sweeney
1/16	Amherst	1	D. Ziomek	1/26	Falmouth	6	M. Keleher
1/21	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen	1/27	Squantum	12	P. O'Neill
2/10-28	Wayland	1	A. McCarthy#	2/23	P.I.	47	BBC (S. Grinley)
2/22-25	W. Tisbury	1	L. McDowell	Pine Warbler			
Eastern Bluebird				1/1	Bourne	1	J. Kricher
1/thr	M.V.	100+	fide A. Keith	1/5	Acoaxet	1	M. Lynch#
1/5	Turners Falls	7	S. Surner#	1/5	Groveland	1	D. Chickering
1/5	Acoaxet	9	M. Lynch#	1/11	Quincy	1	C. Dalton
1/5	Bourne	8	K. Anderson#	1/15, 2/24	Mashpee	2	M. Keleher
1/8	Westboro	30+	C. Passarelli	1/30	E. Sandwich	1	D. Manchester
1/11	Lakeville	12	K. Holmes	2/7	Dennisport	1	D. Silverstein
1/12	Westport	26	BBC (R. Stymeist)	2/15-19	M.V.	14 total	fide A. Keith
1/13	Wayland	8	G. Long	2/24	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher
1/21	Hyannis	18	C. Buelow	Yellow-breasted Chat			
1/25	Halifax	7	J. Sweeney#	1/1	Jamaica Plain	1	A. Joslin
1/25	Ipswich	7	J. Berry#	1/1-12	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek + v.o.
1/28	Medfield	10	E. Morrier	1/5	Westport	2	M. Lynch#
2/1	Hamilton	8	BBC (J. Berry)	1/5	Eastham (F.H.)	1	J. Hoye#
2/2	Rochester	9	J. Kricher	1/9-20	Falmouth	1	v.o.
2/5	Rowley	10	J. Soucy#	Eastern Towhee			
2/28	Franklin	7	G. Jorgensen	1/5	Acoaxet	11	M. Lynch#

Eastern Towhee (continued)				1/5	Taunton	3	G. d'Entremont#
1/11 Ipswich	1 f	J. Berry#		1/7	GMNWR	6	J. Forbes
1/11 Petersham	1	M. Sylvia		1/9	Arlington	2	M. Rines
1/20 Newbury	1 m	S. Stichter		1/18	Hanson	4	J. Young
1/26 Stoneham	1	D. + I. Jewell		1/26	Northbridge	3	M. Lynch#
1/30 Mattapoisett	3	F. Smith		2/9	Wakefield	2	F. Vale
2/thr Middleboro	1 m	K. Anderson			White-crowned Sparrow		
2/2 Fairhaven	4	G. d'Entremont		1/2-2/24	Marblehead	1	K. Haley
2/9 Woods Hole	1	R. Vander Pyl#		1/5	Boston	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)
American Tree Sparrow				2/16	Westport	2 ad	G. d'Entremont
1/1 N. Marshfield	32	G. d'Entremont		2/22	Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney
1/3 Westboro	35	C. Buelow		2/28	Littleton	1	G. Marley
1/5 Westport	21	M. Lynch#			Lapland Longspur		
1/18 Cumb. Farms	50	K. Anderson		1/1-5	Northampton	10-12	v.o.
1/18 Bridgewater	75+	J. Sweeney		1/5	Deerfield	1	S. Sumner#
1/19 P.I.	75	BBC (J. Barton)		1/16	P.I.	8	J. Nelson
2/23 DWWS	22	D. Furbish		2/1-8	Northampton	1	v.o.
2/23 Boston	80+	A. Joslin		2/13	Middleboro	9	J. Kricher
Chipping Sparrow					Snow Bunting		
thr E. Middleboro	1 imm	K. Anderson		1/4	P'town (R.P.)	60	M. Faherty#
1/thr E. Falmouth	18 max	G. Gove#		1/5	Boston	30	BBC (R. Stymeist)
1/12 Chilmark	1	A. Keith		1/5	Bolton Flats	9	S. Sutton
2/1-15 Falmouth	10-12	G. Gove		1/6	Newbypt	6	D. + I. Jewell
2/26 Mashpee	4	M. Keleher		1/11	Northampton	3	R. Packard#
2/28 Southwick	1	S. Kellogg		1/12	Cape Ann	12	BBC (D. Peloquin)
Clay-colored Sparrow				1/17	Ipswich (C.B.)	3	J. Berry#
thr Newbypt	1	S. Grinley + v.o.		1/25	Gr. Barrington	70	T. Collins
1/1 Arlington	1	K. Hartel		1/25	Chester	6	R. Packard#
1/18, 25 Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney		2/2	Fairhaven	35	G. d'Entremont
Field Sparrow				2/8	Rochester	4	M. LaBossiere
1/thr E. Falmouth	1	G. Gove#		2/10	Cumb. Farms	5	K. Anderson#
1/5 Raynham	15	G. d'Entremont#		2/26	Orange	10	M. Taylor
1/12 Westport	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)		2/27	Hadley	10	C. Gentes
1/26 Northbridge	1	M. Lynch#			Blue Grosbeak		
2/23 Nantucket	1	B. Vigneau		2/23	Chatham	1	J. Kenneally
Vesper Sparrow					Dickcissel		
1/18 W. Bridgewater	1	J. Sweeney		1/5	Bolton Flats	1	S. Sutton
2/16 Fairhaven	1	G. d'Entremont			Red-winged Blackbird		
Savannah Sparrow				thr	DWWS	150 max	D. Furbish
1/1 Gr. Barrington	1	J. Johnson		1/3	W. Roxbury	27	A. Joslin
1/5 Bolton Flats	15	S. Sutton		1/9	Halifax	450	M. Faherty
1/9 W. Bridgewater	1	M. Faherty		1/12	Sheffield	24 f	R. Stymeist#
1/11 Northampton	1	R. Packard		1/18	Bridgewater	200+	J. Sweeney
1/11 P.I.	2	R. Gray#		1/25	Cumb. Farms	60	J. Sweeney#
1/12 Swansea/Somerset	2	M. Lynch#		1/25	Orleans	42	J. Trimble#
1/16 Sunderland	1	R. Ranney		2/2	Fairhaven	35	G. d'Entremont
2/8 Cumb. Farms	10	J. Sweeney		2/23	Boston	375+	A. Joslin
2/9 Westport	3	M. Lynch#			Eastern Meadowlark		
2/16 Fairhaven	10	M. Maurer		1/thr	DWWS	22 max	D. Furbish
2/22 Haydenville	1	R. Packard		1/4	Barnstable (S.N.)	8	D. Furbish
Ipswich Sparrow				1/8	Marston Mills	11	D. Manchester
1/5 Salisbury	1	D. Chickering		1/12	Cumb. Farms	3	K. Anderson
1/5 Ipswich	1	BBC (J. Nove)		1/19	Falmouth	14	BBC (R. Campbell)
1/19 P'town (R.P.)	2	B. Nikula#		1/20	S. Dart (A. Pd)	2	J. Sweeney
1/20 Fairhaven	1	J. Sweeney		2/8	Newbury	1	F. Gardner#
1/30, 2/29 P.I.	4	R. Heil		2/8	P.I.	1	F. Gardner
2/14 W. Dennis B.	2	D. Silvestein#		2/9	Westport	3	M. Lynch#
Grasshopper Sparrow				2/12	Attleboro	6	J. Sweeney
2/8-9 Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney		2/20	Fairhaven	9	O. Spalding#
Fox Sparrow					Rusty Blackbird		
1/thr Boston	1	M. Verdoes		1/8	Wayland	1 f	A. McCarthy#
1/1 N. Marshfield	1	G. d'Entremont		1/11	Lenox	4	R. Wheeler
1/5 WBWS	1	J. Hoye#		1/13	Wayland	2	G. Long
1/5, 20 DWWS	1	D. Furbish		1/26	Lakeville	1	J. Sweeney
1/12 Westport	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)		1/26	Northbridge	2	M. Lynch#
1/12 Mt.A.	1	L. Ferrarasso		1/30	Seekonk	30	E. Slattery
1/13 Newton	1	R. Danca		2/10	Dedham	15	E. Cutler
1/15 Woods Hole	2	G. Gove		2/23	DWWS	4	D. Furbish
2/4 Lincoln	1	M. Durand		2/23	Boston	1	A. Joslin
2/7 Harwich	3	E. Banks			Common Grackle		
2/12 Mattapoisett	11	M. LaBossiere		1/29	Falmouth	15	G. Gove#
2/21 Falmouth	8	M. Kasprzyk		2/15	Falmouth	84	G. Gove#
2/22 Gay Head	1	M. Moreis		2/21	W. Dennis B.	3	P. Flood
2/26 Nahant	1	R. Heil		2/23	Boston	3	A. Joslin
Swamp Sparrow				2/24	Longmeadow	4	R. Packard#
1/1 S. Berkshire	4	CBC		2/28	Franklin	12	G. Jorgensen
1/1 N. Marshfield	3	G. d'Entremont			Brown-headed Cowbird		
1/4 Barnstable (S.N.)	2	D. Furbish		1/thr	DWWS	3	D. Furbish

Brown-headed Cowbird (continued)				Purple Finch			
1/9	Cumb. Farms	40	M. Faherty	1/1	S. Berkshire	3	CBC
1/12	Westport	115	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/5	Westport	1 m	M. Lynch#
2/2	Fairhaven	12	G. d'Entremont	1/7	New Salem	1 m	W. Lafley
2/23	Boston	2	A. Joslin	1/11-20	New Ashford	1	B. Lafley
Baltimore Oriole				1/24	Halifax	1	K. Holmes
1/1	Melrose	1	J. Young	2/11	Pittsfield	1	T. Collins
1/1-2	Bradford	1 m 1W	D. + S. Larson	2/22	New Bedford	1 m	T. O'Connor
2/15	Tisbury	1	M. + E. Sibert	Pine Siskin			
2/18	Westport	1 f	fide M. Maurer	1/7	Duxbury	1	T. Nickerson
				1/7	Lenox	1	R. Laubach

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Locations and Organizations

A.A.	Arnold Arboretum
ABC	Allen Bird Club
A.P.	Andrews Point, Rockport
A.Pd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth
B.	Beach
Barre F.D.	Barre Falls Dam,
	Barre, Rutland
B.I.	Belle Isle, E. Boston
B.R.	Bass Rocks, Gloucester
BBC	Brookline Bird Club
BBS	Breeding Bird Survey
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester
C.B.	Crane Beach, Ipswich
C.P.	Crooked Pond, Boxford
Cambr.	Cambridge
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms,
	Middleboro
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary
DWMA	Delaney WMA
	Stow, Bolton, Harvard
DWWS	Daniel Webster WS
E.P.	Eastern Point, Gloucester
EMHW	Eastern Mass. Hawk Watch
F.E.	First Encounter Beach, Eastham
F.H.	Fort Hill, Eastham
F.M.	Fowl Meadow
F.P.	Fresh Pond, Cambridge
F.Pk	Franklin Park, Boston
G40	Gate 40, Quabbin Res.
GMNWR	Great Meadows NWR
H.	Harbor
H.P.	Halibut Point, Rockport
HRWMA	High Ridge WMA, Gardner
I.	Island
IRWS	Ipswich River WS
L.	Ledge
M.V.	Martha's Vineyard
MAS	Mass. Audubon Society
MARC	Mass. Avian Records Committee
MBO	Manomet Center for
	Conservation Science
MBWMA	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury
MNWS	Marblehead Neck WS
MSSF	Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth

Mt.A.	Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.
NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord
NEHW	New England Hawk Watch
Newbypt	Newburyport
ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
P.I.	Plum Island
Pd	Pond
P'town	Provincetown
Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro
R.P.	Race Point, Provincetown
Res.	Reservoir
S. Dart.	South Dartmouth
S.B.	South Beach, Chatham
S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
SRV	Sudbury River Valley
SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
TASL	Take A Second Look
WBWS	Boston Harbor Census
WMWS	Wellfleet Bay WS
Worc.	Wachusett Meadow WS
WS	Worcester
	Wildlife Sanctuary

Other Abbreviations

ad	adult
alt	alternate
b	banded
br	breeding
dk	dark (morph)
f	female
fl	fledgling
imm	immature
juv	juvenile
lt	light (morph)
m	male
max	maximum
migr	migrating
n	nesting
ph	photographed
pl	plumage
pr	pair
S	summer (1S = 1st summer)
v.o.	various observers
W	winter (2W = second winter)
yg	young
#	additional observers

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO BIRD OBSERVER

Sightings for any given month must be reported in writing by the eighth of the following month, and may be submitted by postal mail or e-mail. Send written reports to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 94 Grove Street, Watertown, MA 02172. Include name and phone number of observer, common name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, other observer(s), and information on age, sex, and morph (where relevant). For instructions on e-mail submission, visit: <<http://massbird.org/birdobserver/sightings/>>.

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

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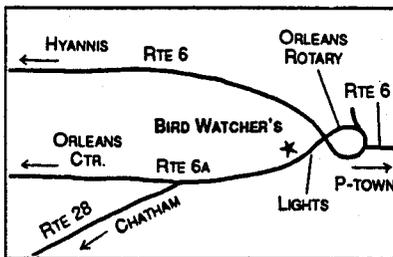
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ABOUT THE COVER

Louisiana Waterthrush

The Louisiana Waterthrush (*Seiurus motacilla*) gets its scientific name from its habit of wagging its tail up and down as it forages along streambeds or perches on rocks. *Seiurus* is from the Greek for “shaking tail,” and *motacilla* from the Latin, meaning “move tail.” It is an early migrant wood warbler, and its loud, whistled song is a harbinger of spring for many birdwatchers. This drab bird has a brown back, tail, and wings and is boldly streaked brown below on white to buffy feathers. It is similar in appearance to its close relative, the Northern Waterthrush, but has a larger bill, a broad, white superciliary stripe, a white, unspotted throat, and buffy, rather than yellow or white flanks. Immature birds and adults of both sexes are similar in plumage. The species is monotypic (no subspecies) and forms a superspecies with the Northern Waterthrush.

Louisiana Waterthrushes breed locally throughout most of the eastern half of the United States, from southern Ontario and New England south to northern Florida, and west to east Texas and Minnesota. They are nocturnal migrants that winter from northern Mexico through Central America and in the West Indies and Caribbean islands. They are considered uncommon local breeders in Massachusetts, and a very uncommon migrant, although in April a few show up in the local warbler hot spots such as Mount Auburn Cemetery, Nahant, or Marblehead Neck. They leave for their wintering grounds in July or August.

Louisiana Waterthrushes are seasonally monogamous and produce a single brood. They favor swiftly flowing, gravel-bottomed streams in moist, hilly, deciduous woodlands and forest, or sometimes around woodland ponds. The male sings a loud and melodious two-part song, the first consisting of 2-5 *seeup, seeup, seeup* notes, followed by a series of short notes of varying length and complexity. The male begins singing on arrival on his streamside territory, which is typically long and narrow, following the geography of the streambed. He will sing all day long until a pair bond has been established, whereupon singing is much reduced. The song serves to attract a mate as well as to advertise his territorial rights to neighboring males. He sings from a perch that can vary from several feet to thirty-five feet above the stream. A twittering flight song, often at dusk, accompanies the slow, exaggerated wingbeats of his nuptial flight display. Females also sing, but not with the clarity or intensity of males. Both also have a variety of *chip, churr,* and *chut* calls. Vigorous chases occur between males that sometimes end in fights, with males facing each other in the air, attacking with bills, wings, and claws. They also face each other on the ground and raise and lower their wings, giving *zizz* calls. The function of tail wagging is poorly understood, but it shares this behavior with other ground and stream-dwelling birds, such as the Northern Waterthrush and Spotted Sandpiper. Louisiana Waterthrushes are also territorial on their wintering grounds, defending a section of stream as they do on the breeding grounds.

The pair chooses a nest site, usually a cavity along the stream bank under logs or in the roots of a fallen tree. Both are involved in construction of a nest of leaves, twigs, and mud, lined with moss and fine plant fibers. The female typically lays five red-brown spotted, white eggs. She alone has a brood patch and does all of the incubation prior to hatching in 12-14 days. The female broods the chicks that fledge in 10-12 days. Adults will perform distraction displays to potential nest predators, and both parents feed the fledglings for 3-4 weeks.

Louisiana Waterthrushes forage mostly in the stream channel for aquatic insects and other invertebrates. They also glean low vegetation, leaf-litter, moss, and rocks, and will hawk insects from the air. They have been reported eating small frogs and fish, and hence are one of the few wood warblers to take vertebrate prey. They also forage at the edges of swamps and ponds. They are preyed upon by accipiters, and their nests are subject to predation by snakes and mammals, such as raccoons and opossums. They are frequently victims of Brown-headed Cowbird nest parasitism – one study reported that 81 percent of nests were parasitized. They fight back, however, and may bury cowbird eggs or puncture them with their beaks and eject them from the nest. Louisiana Waterthrush populations in the eastern United States appear to be declining, but increasing in the west. Habitat destruction and forest fragmentation on both the breeding and wintering grounds is a problem that appears to plague most long-distance migrant, forest interior species. They appear, however, to be expanding their range in northern New England, perhaps a response to reforestation of areas cut down in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. 

William E. Davis, Jr.

About the Cover Artist

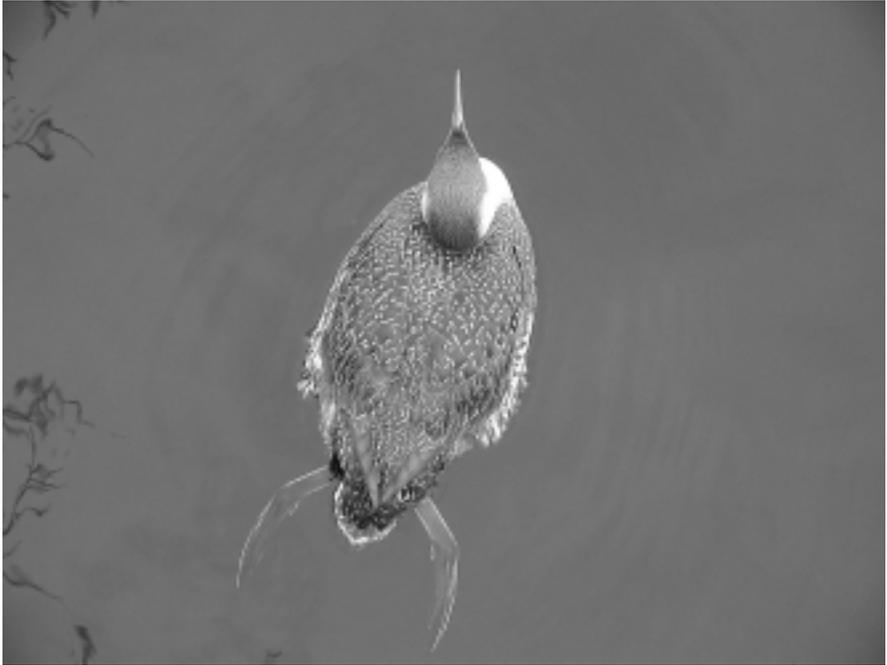
Julie Zickefoose is a widely published natural history writer and artist. Educated at Harvard University in biology and art, she worked for six years as a field biologist for The Nature Conservancy before turning to a freelance career. Her observations on the natural history and behavior of birds stem from more than three decades of experience in the field. With her husband Bill Thompson III, Editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, and their two children, Phoebe and Liam, Julie lives on an 80-acre nature sanctuary in the Appalachian foothills of southeast Ohio. A 42-foot tall bird-watching tower atop their home helps them enjoy and catalogue the wildlife of the sanctuary. Julie's art and writings may be seen at <http://www.juliezickefoose.com>. 



GREAT BLUE HERONS BY MARJORIE RINES

AT A GLANCE

April 2003



MARJORIE RINES

Sometimes field identification problems occur in strange ways, with different examples having been periodically enumerated in these pages. Undoubtedly one of the most frequent identification difficulties has to do with the view obtained of a mystery species. This month, the reader is clearly confronted with such a situation.

The first task when viewing the April mystery bird is to determine the context of the bird in the picture. Since it appears that there is foliage or leaves at the left of the picture, there is an initial suggestion that the bird is adjacent to a tree or shrub. Upon closer inspection, however, it seems obvious that the bird cannot possibly be in flight or be perched near a plant, either. Although the bird could conceivably be lying flat on the ground with leaves nearby, what is the surface made of that it's lying on that could appear so totally without texture?

Rather than lead the possibly befuddled reader down a garden path, let me simply offer the fact that the bird is in water, not on land. While it seems remarkable that there are few other clues that the background medium is water, the *very* discerning reader might just be able to make out that the leaves in the left of the picture resemble those of *Potamogeton* sp. – a large genus of common, aquatic pond weeds. Once the fact that the bird is in the water is clearly established, the perspective of the picture

becomes more obvious. The image must have been obtained from directly overhead, the only plane that could possibly provide such a view.

Now that the mystery species has clearly been determined to be a waterbird of some sort, the identification process is considerably simplified. The fact that the bird has a long, pointed bill at once eliminates all waterfowl species, including mergansers, which never possess finely speckled upperparts. Similarly, cormorants and alcids (except the Black Guillemot in winter plumage, which always shows large white wing-patches) are uniformly black in color above, not pale gray and finely speckled with white. A juvenile Northern Gannet would have a substantially longer tail and would be less white below, and none of the black-and-white shearwater species would be speckled on the back. They would also possess conspicuous tubes on their upper mandible. With the field thus narrowed, the mystery bird has to be either a loon or a grebe.

Knowing this, the identification is easy. Only the Red-throated Loon (*Gavia stellata*) in winter plumage has the combination of a pale gray back finely speckled with white, an immaculately white neck, a pale gray head, and a thin pointed bill. Although the juveniles of other loon species exhibit pale barring on the dark feathers of their back and scapulars, none have the fine spots shown by the pictured loon. Likewise, the generally darker back and top of the head of Horned, Red-necked, Eared, and Western (and Clark's) grebes are uniformly dark and unspotted.

Red-throated Loons are common to very common coastal fall and spring migrants in Massachusetts, and small numbers regularly appear inland, especially in the fall. In most years, modest numbers spend the winter off Cape Cod and the Islands, but in summer the species is quite unusual in Bay State waters. Marjorie Rines took the spectacular digital image of the Red-throated Loon at Mystic Lake in Arlington. 🐦

Wayne R. Petersen



PILEATED WOODPECKER BY R.E. JOHNSON

AT A GLANCE



PETER YESKIE

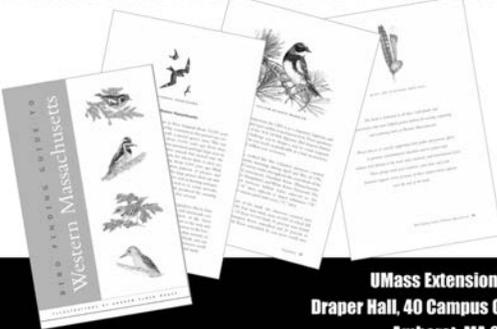
Can you identify this bird?

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

The classification of living birds, or, for that matter, any other large group of animals, is full of hopeless difficulties and insoluble problems.

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