

Bird Observer

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HOT BIRDS



Steve Haydock spotted this **White-faced Ibis** (left) on Plum Island on April 22 and Suzanne Sullivan photographed it April 24. But on April 26, birders watching the ibis were horrified when a one-eyed Peregrine Falcon attacked and killed it.

Rick Bowes discovered a **Harris's Sparrow** (right) on Duxbury Beach in November, and on April 21 he took this photograph of it in moult.



On April 29, Warren Tatro discovered a **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** (left) on Plum Island and Jon Saperia was lucky enough to capture a couple of images before it disappeared.

John Young sighted a **Cassin's Sparrow** (right) in Truro on May 15. It didn't take long for Blair Nikula to get up there with his camera, and he took this diagnostic photograph. If accepted by the MARC, this will be a first state record.



On May 18, Ian Davies spotted a **Eurasian Hobby** (left) from his dining-room window at Manomet. Later that day, Jeremiah Trimble was able to get this photograph. If accepted by the MARC, it will be a first state record and possibly only a second record for the lower 48.

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SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS BY SANDY SELESKY

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Bird Observer

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Birding Brownfield Bog

Pat Moynahan

Brownfield Bog is located near the Maine/New Hampshire border in Brownfield, Maine. It is an ideal location for multiple-state listers, lovers of pristine Maine woods, and searchers for specific target species. Without question, it is one of the top birding spots of interior New England. Maintained by the State of Maine as the Brownfield Bog Wildlife Management Area, it is comprised of 5700 acres of shallow wetlands that are bisected by the Saco River and interspersed with forested tracts. Spring migration and early breeding season are ideal times to visit the site.



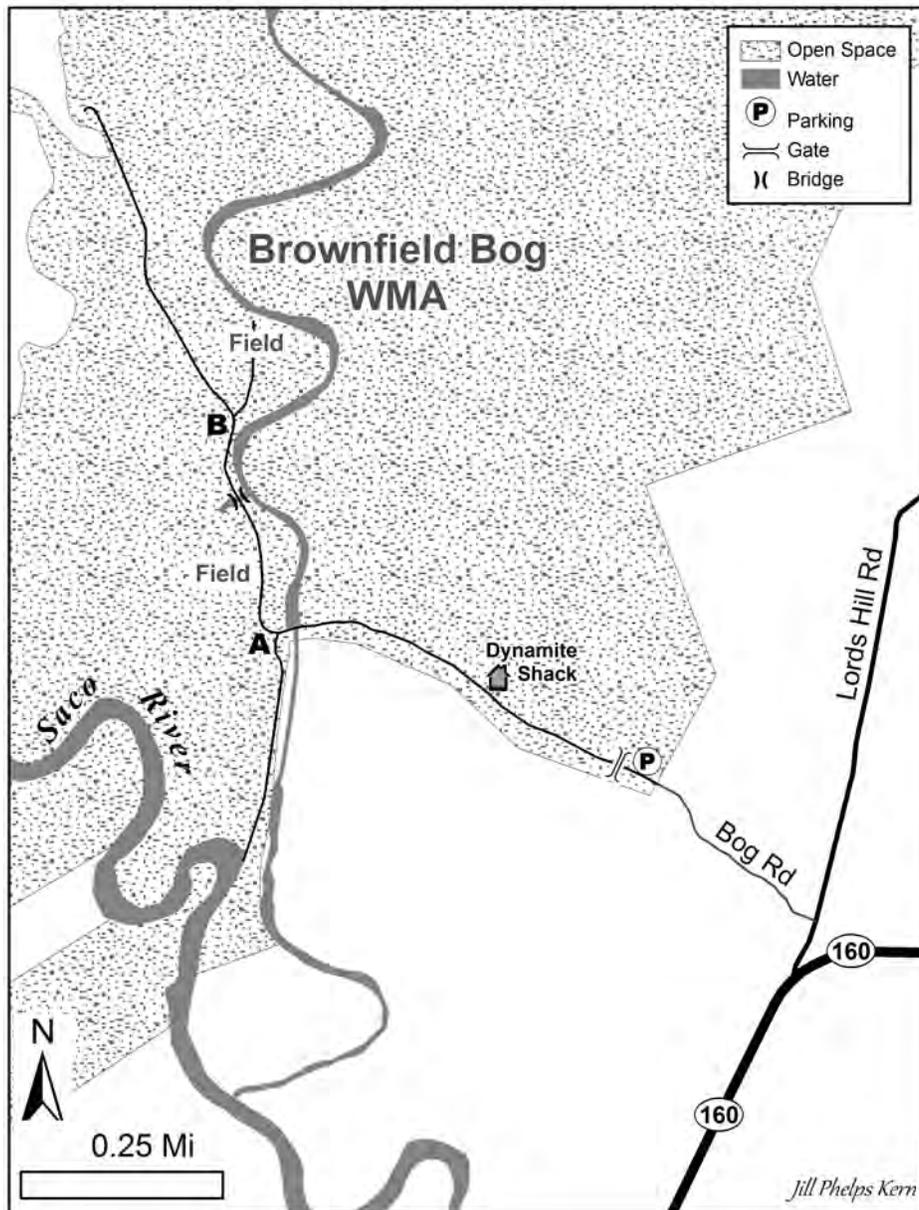
Located in Brownfield in Oxford County (the town is just south of Fryeburg), the bog can be reached by traveling north on State Route 160 from the intersections of Maine State Routes 5, 113, and 160 in East Brownfield. One mile from this intersection, Route 160 bends sharply to the right while Lords Hills Road continues straight ahead. Follow Lords Hill Road for about 150 feet until a dirt road (Bog Road) joins it on the left. A private residence is on the right as you enter the dirt road. The entrance to Brownfield Bog Wildlife Management Area is located a quarter of a mile farther down. Please do not start birding until well past the residence. A four-wheel-drive vehicle may be needed during mud season since the road holds both snow and mud until late April or early May.

Before the parking area and yellow gate a quarter mile down the dirt road, there can be excellent spring birding. The area is often filled with the songs of Wood Thrushes, Black-throated Blue Warblers, Black-throated Green Warblers, Ovenbirds, and boreal warblers in migration. Golden-winged Warblers reportedly bred in this area in the 1990s, though I have not seen this bird in the bog. It is best to proceed to the parking area on the right before the yellow gate and walk back to bird this rich forested area.



Sign for Brownfield Bog by Lisa Thurston

Walking deeper into the bog from the first yellow gate, you will note a change in the openness of the forest as the bog itself becomes visible on your right. The sounds usually change here as well. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Hairy and Downy woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, and Pileated Woodpeckers can all be sounding off. A first scope of the bog from this area may produce Common and Hooded mergansers, as well as breeding Wood Ducks. Pied-billed Grebe has bred in the bog, and its "throaty barking" can be heard at dawn from this location.



Continuing to walk into the bog on the same dirt road for another quarter-mile, you come to a small white building with green trim on the right, the “Dynamite Shack.” (The name, according to local residents, originated when the building was used to store dynamite in the late 1950s or early 60s. The dynamite was used to construct the road or dike that we walk on today.) Spend time in this area, since both Black- and Yellow-billed cuckoos have been seen or heard here. An Eastern Phoebe usually nests in the eaves of the shack, while Warbling and Red-eyed vireos are

generally abundant. The bog to the right of the shack holds the usual North Woods breeders: Common Yellowthroats, Swamp Sparrows, and, of course, Red-winged Blackbirds. The bog here is worth a scan as well. Be sure to look for both American and Least bitterns. Ospreys and Bald Eagles can be visible. A Golden Eagle was reported in the spring of 1994. Northern Waterthrushes can frequently be heard from this area, and Broad-winged Hawks and accipiters have been observed as well.

Continuing on the road brings you to an intersection (“A” on map). The left-hand road goes to the Saco River and a nice input area for canoeing or picnicking. The intersection has been very reliable for Northern Waterthrush, American Redstart, and Nashville Warbler. Following the main road to the right for about another quarter mile brings you to a large open field on the left. Here you can enjoy the wonderful sound and sight of Wilson’s Snipe displaying. The edge of this field can also deliver the first “burry” *Empidonax* song. Eight flycatcher species, including Olive-sided, have been reported to breed in the bog .

At the small bridge over a narrow streamlet at the end of the field, Least Flycatcher song usually becomes very loud. The next quarter of a mile is the area to search for two target breeding species, the Yellow-throated Vireo and the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Near the Y in the road (“B” on map) both songs can be heard, and the birds usually co-operate with good visuals. Do search the trees carefully in this area for the lichen-covered nest of the Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. This is another area where both cuckoos have been found.

At the Y intersection the right-hand overgrown road leads to an open field which has had both Alder and Willow flycatchers, Virginia Rails, and Spotted Sandpipers. Scan the sky here for hawks and eagles. Linger in this area and enjoy the beautiful view of the White Mountain National Forest to the northwest, listen to the cacophony of bird song, and most of all enjoy the walk in the pristine Maine Woods.

If time allows upon returning to the main road at the Y intersection, continue exploring to the end of the road, which extends for about another mile. Approximately half way to the end there is a slight rise in elevation where the habitat becomes drier pine forest. Just before this change is another good place to search for Yellow-throated



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Brownfield Bog by Marie Jordan

Vireos. The end of the road comes out to more bog and open water, where Ring-necked Ducks have bred and Virginia and Sora rails have been heard calling madly at dusk.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Audubon database, ebird.org, reports a total of 146 species for the bog, but the potential is probably far greater, including many boreal species in migration. This article does not intend to identify all breeding or possible species. I have personally seen 100 species in morning walks during York County Audubon spring field trips led by Lisa Thurston the first week of June. Lisa contributed information for this article.

For more information, including field trip dates and times, check the York County Audubon web page <<http://www.YorkCountyAudubon.org>>. Tin Mountain Conservation Center also schedules weekly spring walks <info@tinmountain.org>.

Tick and mosquito protection, boots, hats, and sunscreen are recommended for this outing. Carpooling is encouraged since parking is limited at the site. It is possible, with permission, to stage cars at the store on the corner of Maine Routes 160, 113, and 5. Road conditions into the bog should be carefully evaluated, and please be aware that there is no parking on Lords Hill Road.

Brownfield Bog is one of those magic spots where it is possible to step into the wonder of nature. It is also a gateway to the boreal forest of the nearby White Mountains. Come and enjoy it, and leave it as you found it. 

Pat Moynahan is an avid birder who has been an active member of York County (Maine) Audubon Society for many years. She has a passion for sharing birds with others and helping them to appreciate the beauty, wonder, and importance of nature.



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher at Brownfield Bog by Marie Jordan

Fifteenth Report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee

Matthew P. Garvey and Marshall J. Iliff

The fifteenth report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (hereafter MARC or the committee) details the evaluation of 65 reports involving 46 species or subspecies. Fifty-seven records were accepted. All accepted records in this report were accepted unanimously on the first round of voting unless noted otherwise.

Two new species have been added to the State List. A Little Shearwater (*Puffinus assimilis*) of the distinctive (and probably taxonomically distinct) *baroli* subspecies was documented in pelagic waters near Veatch Canyon in 2007. In addition, an old report of Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) from 1916 was assessed based on the description in a published article and accepted as the first and only state record. This brings to 494 the total list of species accepted for Massachusetts. Other highlights in this report include the first state record of Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*), which was re-reviewed and accepted following last year's acceptance of a 2008 Falmouth record; Massachusetts's second Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), only the fifth for the lower 48 states; and, in the "it's about time" category, MARC's official acceptance of Newburyport's famous Ross's Gull (*Rhododesthia rosea*) of 1975. This report also includes some intriguing records that were not accepted, highlighted by a Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) record that very nearly passed (7–2 on the third round) but ultimately was rejected based on the thorny question of provenance.

The list of species reviewed by the MARC (the "Review List") is available at <<http://www.maavianrecords.com>>. Several changes to the Review List were made at the Committee's February 2011 annual meeting. The committee voted to remove Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) and "Richardson's" Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii hutchinsii*) from the Review List, effective January 1, 2011. Historical records of each species through December 31, 2010, will continue to be reviewed. Moreover, the committee will continue to review both species outside of typical dates and areas of occurrence, as well as records of subspecies not yet confirmed from Massachusetts (e.g., *P. f. fulva*, *B. h. minima*, or *B. h. taverneri*). Motions to remove White-faced Storm-Petrel and Swallow-tailed Kite failed, and the committee will continue to review those species. The committee also voted *not* to add Boreal Chickadee to the Review List, based on the long history of irruptions into western Massachusetts, with an average of more than three per year since 2000. Boreal Chickadee will be reviewed at the committee's discretion, such as when it occurs in eastern Massachusetts, which has very few recent records.

The MARC made several changes to its bylaws this year. The main changes were additional requirements and guidelines for creating ballots and commenting on records. These changes will provide more structure and encourage greater committee

involvement in typically thorny issues like record date ranges, exact locations, and the particularly vexing “same bird” issues. Essentially, when faced with the possibility of a bird returning to the same site in multiple years, or the possibility of the same species reported from two separate places during the same period, the secretary will err towards circulating a new record for each sighting. If the majority of voting members believe that an accepted record probably pertains to a bird that was the subject of another accepted record, those records will be linked in the published data to reflect this connection. The MARC also approved a proposal by Naeem Yusuff to redefine the “Adjacent Ocean” within the MARC’s jurisdiction. Yusuff noted that the former definition created a “no-bird’s land” where, due to the position of the Hague line separating U.S. and Canadian waters, some U. S. waters were closer to Massachusetts than to any other state but were excluded from MARC’s purview because they were closer to Nova Scotia. The bylaws were changed so that the “Adjacent Ocean” within MARC’s purview will now include oceanic waters within U. S. territorial waters (i.e., south of the Hague line) and closer to Massachusetts than to any other state, within 200 nautical miles.

MARC depends on birders of all skill levels in the strong Massachusetts birding community to provide evidence needed to evaluate and, more importantly, archive the state’s rich ornithological record. Individuals who have provided evidence, whether photographic (ph.), video (v.), or audio (au.), are noted in parenthesis in each account. The committee strongly encourages written submissions (signaled below with a “+”), even where photographs exist. The names of evidence providers are followed by the MARC record number. In addition, when known, we try to credit the discoverer either in the text or with an asterisk (*) if he or she has supplied evidence.

As in the fourteenth report, this document provides specific geographic information for each record, including the location, town, and county (the latter is shown in italics). Species taxonomy and nomenclature follows the seventh edition of the AOU Check-list (AOU 1998) and supplements (e.g., Chesser et al. 2009, Chesser et al. 2010). Each species is listed with its scientific name the first time it is mentioned in the text but not thereafter. Subspecies nomenclature follows the Clements Checklist of Birds of the World taxonomy (version 6.5), available at <<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist>>.

The 2010 roster of MARC voting members was David Clapp, Richard S. Heil, Marshall J. Iliff (chair), Trevor Lloyd-Evans, Blair Nikula, Wayne R. Petersen, James P. Smith, Richard R. Veit, and Robert Stymeist. There have been several roster changes for the year ahead. Stymeist and Clapp retired after meeting their six-year term limit, Heil resigned, and Iliff was elected to serve a second term. Jeremiah R. Trimble was picked by special election to fill the one-year vacancy left by Heil, while Scott Sumner and Mark Faherty were elected as new members. Matt Garvey was appointed for another year as secretary, and Marshall J. Iliff was re-elected chair. We thank Clapp, Heil, and Stymeist for their service as voting members. We also thank Erik Nielsen for considerable work on the MARC database over the past year, Naeem Yusuff for valuable assistance (including his clarification of the offshore boundaries of Massachusetts), and Trimble for his significant work compiling evidence and

supporting the website even during his “off” year. Nikula and Lloyd-Evans provided valuable editorial assistance on this article.

The MARC website <<http://www.maavianrecords.com>> has much more information, including the MARC bylaws, past annual reports, the State List, and the Review List. We plan to add species accounts for all review list species and hope that this will be of use to birders in Massachusetts and beyond to help understand the status and occurrence patterns of rarities in Massachusetts. Moreover, we hope to use the Internet to publicize the rich documentation in the MARC archives.

This year, we report statistics after the species name for each rare bird. The numbers in brackets show the number of MARC’s accepted records in this report, followed by the total number of MARC accepted records for that species. Since the MARC still has not reviewed all the rare bird records for the state, we use a plus sign (+) to signal species that have records that have yet to be reviewed. Thus, [3,6+] signifies that there are three accepted records in this report and six MARC accepted records in total, but that we are aware of one or more additional reports that we hope to review soon. We do not use a plus sign for 2010 or 2011 records that are currently in review. Even where a subspecies is specified, the statistics given refer to the species unless noted otherwise. For example, because all records of Bar-tailed Godwit are reviewed, the statistics refer to the species, not to the subspecies group reviewed in this report. Species not on the Review List do not receive a count.

The number of + signs in this report highlights how much work we have to do with historical records in order to provide a meaningful database of rarities. But it’s a labor of love, so please keep us busy—both by digging up any old documentation you have in an attic somewhere and by finding new birds for us to review!

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) [1,2]

An adult Pink-footed Goose found and identified by Randy Fisher at the Dennis Pines Golf Course, Dennis, *Barnstable*, January 16–February 20, 1999 (ph. D. Crockett, †S. Smolen-Morton, ph. †J. Trimble; 1999-24), was considered of “questionable origin” when first reviewed in 2002 (Rines 2002), in part due to the bird’s apparent confiding behavior. At the time the Dennis bird was seen, there were very few North American records, but many more records have accumulated throughout the Northeast since then. Following the acceptance of one at Falmouth, *Barnstable*, January 12–15, 2009 (2009-10; Iliff and Garvey 2010), and based upon a resubmission by Jeremiah Trimble, the MARC agreed to re-review the 1999 record. After two rounds, the Dennis record (1999-24) was accepted unanimously for the same



Pink-footed Goose by Jeremiah Trimble

reasons summarized by Iliff and Garvey (2010) for the Falmouth record: 1) Pink-footed Geese are rarely kept in captivity; 2) their numbers in the Northeast have been increasing steadily since the mid-1990s concurrent with a rise in the breeding population in Greenland, a known source for migrant geese in northeastern North America; and 3) the patterns of occurrence among the burgeoning number of records are consistent with wintering patterns of Greenland geese. The age ratio (all North American records pertain to adults) is consistent with the predominance of adults in other Greenlandic geese, e.g., Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) and Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons flavirostris*). The predominance of these adults may suggest that failed breeders join Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) at molting grounds in Greenland or Arctic Canada. The Dennis Pink-footed now represents the first record for Massachusetts. Notably, an adult in Sudbury/Concord, *Middlesex*, November 17–December 25, 2010, is currently under review by the committee as the state's third record.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) [2,10+]

While a Martha's Vineyard record of an escapee Barnacle served as a reminder that wild provenance should not always be taken for granted (see Records Not Accepted below), two other Barnacle Geese in known wild-goose hotspots corresponded to the pattern of occurrence that the committee now believes is consistent with natural movements. The first was an adult at Mill Pond, South Egremont, February 12–March 16 (ph. S. Carroll*, †M. Lynch*; 2010-08) and represented a first record for *Berkshire*. Another adult was found in *Middlesex* by David Sibley on October 20, 2010, and lingered until at least December 17, dividing its time between the fields off School Street in Acton, the correctional facility fields in Concord, and points in between (ph. K. Klasman, ph. D. Mitev, ph. E. Nielsen, ph. Pete Wrublewski; 2010-37). If any goose-loving birder ever has to do hard time, may he or she at least have the good fortune to do it near the Concord rotary!

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [3,8+; note that males were just added to the Review List last year.]

For the second year in a row, John Hines pulled a male Tufted Duck out of the twisting stretch of the Sudbury River that crosses the Wayland/Sudbury line, *Middlesex*, near the bridges for Routes 20 and 27. In all likelihood the same bird as last year's, this time the bird consorted mainly with a pair of Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) and stayed in the area February 3 through March 21, 2010 (ph. S. Mirick; 2010-21). A couple of major floods of the river made viewing difficult, if not impossible, for periods during the bird's stay. Fortunately, when another male Tufted Duck visited the nearby Charles River in Waltham, *Middlesex*, with a trio of Lesser Scaup on February 19, 2010, the Sudbury bird had been seen just a few hours earlier, suggesting that the bird in Waltham was indeed a separate individual. The Waltham bird was a one-day wonder, but thankfully its finder, Michael Mastropasqua, captured some stunning images (ph. M. Mastropasqua*; 2010-22). Yet another long-lingering and likely returning male Tufted Duck at the James V. Turner Reservoir (mostly in *Providence*, Rhode Island) crossed the Massachusetts border into Seekonk, *Bristol*, December 3, 2009, and remained in the general area through March 16, 2010 (ph. M.

Bornstein, ph. I. Davies, ph. E. LoPresti; 2009-51). The Turner Reservoir had held a male Tufted Duck the prior winter as well, and nearby stretches of the Seekonk and Providence Rivers in Rhode Island have often held a male Tufted Duck in previous winters. While the wild provenance of Tufted Ducks generally is not questioned, there is, interestingly, supporting evidence that this area, particularly on the Rhode Island side, is a hotspot for other Old World visitors as well, including Common Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*), and one apparent “Kamchatka” Mew Gull (*Larus canus kamtschatschensis*) (Rhode Island Avian Records Committee 2010).

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) [1,15+]

A fresh, basic-plumaged bird found off South Beach, *Barnstable*, September 18, 2010, was likely in its first summer or possibly its second (ph. †M. Iliff*). Although distant, the photos—combined with field notes—revealed the salient points for identification: a smallish loon with a smoothly rounded and somewhat puffy rear of the head, a perfectly straight juncture between white fore neck and dark hind neck, a rear hind neck that is only very slightly paler than other parts of the hind neck, a bill held horizontal during observation (Arctic Loon [*Gavia arctica*] holds bill above horizontal), flanks dark to waterline during entire observation, not thick-necked or large-billed like Arctic Loon, upperparts overall dark brown without edging or white squares, and small dagger-shaped bill. With this September report, Pacific Loon has now appeared in Massachusetts during all months, and Massachusetts birders should be on the lookout for it at just about any time of year. Although Pacific Loon has appeared in many Cape Cod locations, this appears to be the first record from well-watched South Beach.

Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) [2,8+]

An Eared Grebe found by Mary Keleher on Mill Pond, Marstons Mills, *Barnstable*, January 2–3, 2010 (ph. v. M. Keleher*, ph. J. Trimble; 2010-01), serves as a good reminder that this species can occur on inland ponds as well as in coastal salt water and estuaries. So it pays to check your grebes carefully, especially in winter. One reported on the December 20, 2008, Buzzard’s Bay Christmas Count in a more traditional coastal location, Quissett Harbor, Falmouth, *Barnstable*, lingered until at least January 9, 2009 (ph. P. Trimble; 2009-45).

Little Shearwater (*Puffinus assimilis baroli*) [1,1]

Whatever you call it—Little Shearwater, Barolo Shearwater, Macaronesian Shearwater—it stands as the greatest of many highlights of the tremendously successful Brookline Bird Club pelagic trips organized by Ida Giriunas. Although the AOU still considers Little Shearwater to be a wide-ranging polytypic species occurring in the Pacific, Antarctic, Indian, and eastern Atlantic oceans, most other taxonomic authorities split Little Shearwater into several species, which genetically are not necessarily closest relatives (Austin et al. 2004). In fact, the two North Atlantic taxa, *baroli* and *boydi*, are actually closer to Audubon’s Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) than to nominate *Puffinus assimilis*. Regardless of the species-level taxonomy, the bird found roughly 18 miles north of Veatch Canyon, *Nantucket*, August 25, 2007 (ph. J. Forbes, ph. †M. Iliff, ph. B. Nikula, ph. C. Pedro, ph. S.



Little Shearwater by Marshall Iliff

Spangenberg, ph. S. Sumner, ph. J. Trimble; 2007-58) clearly represented *baroli*, which some authorities (e.g., Clements 2010, Robb et al. 2008) consider a monotypic species—Barolo Shearwater—while others (e.g., British Ornithological Union) merge it with *boydi* under Macaronesian Shearwater.

The key identification points for this individual were a size much smaller than Manx (*Puffinus puffinus*) and somewhat smaller than Audubon's; white undertail

coverts; under wings extensively white with white extending to the remiges; upper parts blackish with pale silvery panels on greater coverts and white tips on median and greater secondary coverts, creating white wing bars; and face extensively white with prominent black eyes. *Puffinus assimilis boydi* is perhaps most similar but differs in that it looks like a small Audubon's Shearwater, with brownish upperparts, a dark face, and dark undertail coverts. Boyd's Shearwater also lacks the pale silvery upper wing panels and white wing bars.

The bird's flight style did seem at odds with some descriptions in the literature, causing hesitancy among some observers, none of whom had previous experience with *baroli*. Its flight was rapid and low to the water, with long glides on bowed wings. The flaps were quick and hurried but still showed significant bend at the wrist, giving the impression of a larger bird. This did not seem to match the description of "alcid-like flight" sometimes provided (e.g., Finch et al. 1978). Fortunately, the great bird-dog captain Joe Huckemeyer of the Helen H was able to keep on the bird, enabling diagnostic photos and great views by all fortunate to be on board.

This first record for Massachusetts was also just the second documented record for North America. The first was a lighthouse crash victim at Sable Island, Nova Scotia, September 1, 1896 (Dwight 1897, Tufts 1961) and definitely pertains to *baroli* (ph. J. R. Trimble, M. J. Iliff *in litt.*). A purported South Carolina specimen found on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, in late August 1883 has been reported as a Little Shearwater, probably *baroli* (Peters 1924, Post and Gauthreaux 1989), but when Trimble and Iliff examined the original specimen, it appeared to be an Audubon's.

Little Shearwaters may, indeed, be more regular in Northeastern waters than is known, as indicated by the only other credible records: sightings by Bruce Mactavish of a single bird approximately 80 kilometers southwest of Sable Island on September 23, 2003, and a pair approximately 80 kilometers south of Sable Island the following day (Mactavish 2004). Pelagic birders should keep a keen eye out for this taxon.

White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*) [1,3+]

Close, diagnostic photos of a gorgeous adult White-tailed Tropicbird from the north end of Welker Canyon on August 22, 2010, should whet the appetite of Bay State pelagic enthusiasts (ph. E. Savetsky*; 2010-19). Discounting records that do not

rule out Red-billed (*Phaethon aethereus*), this is just the seventh record for Massachusetts and the third reviewed by MARC. All but one of the previous records deal with storm-related birds found moribund or seen from shore. As with many pelagic birds, there are too many known unknowns to assess the regularity of its occurrence offshore in summer, but it is likely more regular than the few records would indicate.

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) [1,9+]

A lone bird harassed by Mute Swan parents (*Cygnus olor*) at Great Point, *Nantucket*, September 12–13, 2010, was found and photographed by Vince Calarco (ph. V. Calarco*; 2010-16). The pure orange yellow bill, narrow amount of bare skin around the eye, and very black and extensive dark primaries and secondaries eliminate the possibility that this was an escaped Old World pelican such as Great White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*).

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) [1,2+]

A lone bird found and photographed by Rachel Farrell just northwest of the Wood's Hole passage on Buzzard's Bay, *Barnstable* August 5, 2010 (ph. R. Farrell*; 2010-31), was an adult or near adult, and thus was a different bird from the first-summer Brown Pelican photographed on August 10 at Stratford Point, Connecticut.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) [4,11+]

A series of White-faced Ibis records from 2009 and 2010, well documented with photographs, raised issues for the committee only in terms of how many individual birds may have been present. In 2009 a White-faced Ibis was photographed on April 7 at Buttonwood Stables Farm off Route 133, Ipswich, *Essex* (ph. R. Heil*; 2009-52); later that year, one was photographed in high breeding plumage on May 19 at the large Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*) rookery at Kettle Island, *Essex* (†J. Berry*, ph. S. Perkins*; 2009-50). This last record raises the possibility of White-faced breeding in the state or pairing with local Glossy Ibis, which makes real the possibility of hybrids appearing in coastal Massachusetts.

More White-faced Ibis were found in 2010, when two were photographed together along with a dozen Glossy Ibis on May 10 at Pikul's Farm at the Rowley/Ipswich border, *Essex* (ph. †P. Brown; 2010-24). A bird similar to one of the Pikul's birds, but with a more worn face pattern, was photographed later that year on June 6 at nearby Plum Island (ph. R. Heil*; 2010-25). This suggests that one of the birds may have been the same in both records, and, indeed, one of the 2010 White-faceds may have been the same bird as in one or both of the 2009 records, since all were from the same general area. One committee member even speculated that, given the date shortly following the Plum Island record, a White-faced Ibis found and photographed by Vin Zollo on July 11, 2010, in Squantum, *Norfolk*, (ph. V. Zollo*; 2010-26) may have been the same bird, although another committee member felt that given the distance, the Squantum bird was more likely a different bird, one that perhaps was associated with a different Glossy Ibis rookery on the Boston Harbor Islands. Regardless, this record documents a new species for *Norfolk*.

The committee has yet to fully address the complicated potential duplication among these records. Going forward, the bylaw changes discussed in the introduction will help the committee determine when records should be treated together as most likely pertaining to the same individual bird.

Great White Heron (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*) [1,2]

A Great White Heron found and documented by Carolyn Longworth in the restored marsh along the hurricane barrier in Fairhaven, *Bristol*, lingered from July 9 through September 9, 2009 (ph. †C. Longworth*; 2009-16), and stirred much discussion among committee members. The record passed 7–1 on a second round of voting, with one member arguing that the criteria for eliminating a pure white Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias herodias*) were not sufficiently established and that a conservative approach was warranted. This point may be true given the Texas Bird Records Committee’s decision that the Great White Heron is merely a color morph and should not be reviewed by their records committee (Texas Bird Records Committee 2006). The TRBC decision was based largely on the discovery of two Great Blue Heron nests in Texas with



Great White Heron by Carolyn Longworth

both white and blue nestlings.

The other committee members agreed that conclusively eliminating a pure white Great Blue Heron is difficult, with little to point to other than leg color (yellowish in Great White, grayish in Great Blue) and perhaps bill size (slightly larger in Great White, but probably useful only in direct comparison). Nonetheless, supporters pointed to the prevalence of summer and fall records in the Northeast, which parallel northward wanderings of other southeastern herons. They contrasted this with a lack of reports of white Great Blues in other seasons, which might be expected of a color morph of Great Blue. The committee also felt that until more information is gleaned about the occurrence of white Great Blue Herons, the right approach would be to treat the records as Great White Herons, which is consistent with how most other records committees have treated similar looking birds. Mitra and Fritz discuss the apparent pattern of vagrancy in their article on two New York records (2002).

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) [1,5+]

Kathleen Bartel’s description to an eBird reviewer of a Swallow-tailed Kite soaring near her house on Mount Terrydiddle, Rehoboth, *Bristol*, on April 29, 2010 (†K. Bartels*; 2010-10), convinced all but one committee member to accept the record, and it passed 8–1 on a second round vote. The majority pointed to certain details of this distinctive species in the description plus the sighting of a Swallow-

tailed Kite days earlier in nearby Rhode Island. The lone dissenter felt that Osprey (*Pandion haeliaetus*) could be a trap for the unwary and that the description did not satisfactorily rule out this possibility.

Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*)

In-hand photos of an adult Broad-winged Hawk found struggling in a yard in Belchertown, *Hampshire*, on December 12, 2009, established a record late date for this species in Massachusetts (ph. S. Surner; 2009-44). The previous late date was November 18, 1959 (Veit and Petersen 1993). Although it was obviously not in the best of health, the bird showed no indication of prior captivity. Interestingly, Nova Scotia has at least two records of wintering Broad-wingeds, and New Brunswick and Connecticut have records as well; each of those records, however, pertains to a juvenile bird (Wheeler 2003).

Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) [1,1+]

Found as the climactic end to a Massachusetts Big Day by Marshall Iliff and Jeremiah Trimble on May 31, 2010, near the North Pool Overlook at Plum Island, *Essex* (au. I. Davies, †M. J. Iliff*; 2010-20), no one actually saw these furtive birds, but scores heard their distinctive “kickee-doo” song, which made the birds twitchable even in daylight hours, but primarily in the evening. Many observers heard two birds, including on the last day they were reported, June 21. All committee members accepted the record of two Black Rails, but there was discussion of the proper date range for both, given that just one bird was initially reported on May 31. The official submission, however, mentioned a probable second bird. The committee ultimately voted 8–0 to accept “up to 2 Black Rails for the period 31 May–21 June 2010.” This marks just the fifth Massachusetts record since 1955, the first since 1976, the first for well-watched Plum Island, and the first accepted by MARC.

Wilson’s Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) [2,8+]

One of the two records of this thick-billed beachcomber from the south was Massachusetts’s earliest ever, a bird found on March 29, 2010, at Madaket, *Nantucket* (ph. Vern Laux; 2010-12). Another, found by Brian Harris on June 11, 2010, at South Beach, *Barnstable*, appeared to be a first-summer male given its worn coverts and moderately black breast band and face (ph. B. Harris*; 2010-14).

Common Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [1,2]

On September 11, 2010, during a walk down South Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, Blair Nikula identified the state’s second record of this partially unpalmed plover based on the calls it gave while flying by and a brief view of the bird on the ground. He recognized the bird later because its dorsal coloration was paler than that of a typical Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) and devoted three hours to tracking and photographing it. When it finally called again, it confirmed his initial impression that the bird was indeed a juvenile Common Ringed Plover (ph. †B. Nikula*; 2010-29). Altogether, he gathered superb documentation that provided all the evidence essential to evaluating this difficult and extremely rare (but easily overlooked) species. Most saliently, photos show the following: diagnostic lack of toe webbing between the innermost toes; paler back than neighboring Semipalmated



Common Ringed Plover by Blair Nikula

Plovers; lack of pale orbital ring; extensive pale forehead and eyebrow; dark face line meeting at the gape; extensive pale fringing on the crown; dark area meeting at the lores; somewhat thinner, more pointed bill; a broad, broken dark breast band; and the broad, extensive white wing stripe. While hardly any of these points alone would be diagnostic, in combination they paint a convincing portrait not replicated by Semipalmated. The clincher, of course,

was the description of “a soft, two note call, slurring upward on the second note” and an aggressive “chuckle” call that was “softer and mellower” than those of the Semipalmated Plovers it was chasing.

The first recorded sighting for Massachusetts was also a juvenile, picked out by call and photographed at nearby North Monomoy on September 5, 1990 (Veit & Petersen 1993; Petersen 1995). The only other records for the lower 48 states are Ninigret Flats, Charlestown, Rhode Island, September 15–22, 1991 (Field Notes of Rhode Island Birds 1991); South Lubec Flats, Maine, August 26–September 5, 2003 (Ellison and Martin 2004); and Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens, New York, September 13, 2005 (New York State Avian Records Committee 2008).

“Siberian” Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica baueri/menzbieri*) [1,11+]

A majority of committee members felt that sightings from North and South Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, were of the same bird, so the committee decided to treat both as one record, although they were initially reviewed separately. The South Beach bird was seen on August 27–28, 2010 (ph. F. Grenon*, ph. D. Mitev, ph. E. Nielsen, †B. Zajda; 2010-15); the North Beach bird was first reported on North Beach Island by Brian Harrington on August 9 and seen again on North Beach on August 28 and September 5 (ph. †W. Petersen; 2010-32). Local shorebird experts (B. Harrington pers. comm., B. Nikula in comments) confirmed that godwits cover the roughly five-mile distance between these sites (and more) in their daily feeding movements in the



Bar-tailed Godwit by Daniel Mitev

Chatham area. These experts noted that the original location on North Beach Island was halfway between the locations of subsequent sightings on South Beach and North Beach, respectively. Given that just three of the 21 previous Massachusetts reports have pertained to the Siberian group (the majority of those identified to subspecies have pertained to the European *L. l. lapponica*), the odds certainly favor the two records pertaining to one individual.

This bird was clearly a representative of the dark-rumped Siberian group, and photos of the underwings further showed the heavily barred axillars. The Committee did discuss subspecies ID and the apparently limited variability in the nominate form. However, the committee members felt that more information was needed on how to separate the Siberian and Alaskan *baueri* from *menzbieri*, which breeds in regions farther west in Russia and is somewhat intermediate between *baueri* and *lapponica*. Previous Massachusetts reports of the Siberian form hail from Monomoy, *Barnstable* July 31–August 13, 1988 (Veit & Petersen 1993), Katama, *Dukes* May 4, 2002 (V. Laux), and South Beach, *Barnstable* May 9, 2004 (B. Nikula); these records have yet to be reviewed by MARC.

Red-necked Stint (*Calidris ruficollis*) [1,12]

Blair Nikula was truly on fire in 2010, and he started the fall shorebird season off early with a Red-necked Stint on South Beach, *Barnstable*, that remained from June 27–July 1 (ph. A. Burdo, ph. I. Davies, ph. L. Seitz, ph. †B. Nikula*, ph. R. Schain; 2010-30). The wings and back seemed to have a mix of relatively fresh alternate feathers and worn basic-type feathers, suggesting the bird was a first alternate male. Its bright coloration resembled that of breeding-plumaged Sanderlings (*Calidris alba*), a resemblance that apparently caused some confusion to eager twitchers. Birders should be cautious with stint identifications and always take care to specifically eliminate Sanderling. We also suggest that birders continue to document birds like this through the length of their stay so that accurate date ranges can be established. None of Massachusetts’s twelve recorded Red-necked Stints have been documented to remain for a week. Half of the records are from June through mid-July, a reminder to shorebird enthusiasts to get out there with the summer crowds and hit the beach.



Red-necked Stint by Blair Nikula

Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*) [1,2+]

Two sightings of an adult Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, one by Brian Harrington on October 3, 2010, on “Minimoy” and the other across the water at South Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, by Daniel Mitev on October 9 (ph. D. Mitev; 2010-35), established only the fourth record of this species in Massachusetts and the first since 1989. The only other adult was at Plymouth Beach on June 30, 1971 (Veit & Petersen 1993; Rines 2009; 1971-02).



Sharp-tailed Sandpiper by Daniel Mitev

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) [1,2+]

A Curlew Sandpiper at Sandy Point, Plum Island, *Essex*, represents only the third



Curlew Sandpiper by Erik Nielsen

juvenile record in Massachusetts and also stands as the Commonwealth's latest record. Found by Suzanne Sullivan on October 8, 2010, it remained through the 28th, during which time it afforded scores of birders a chance to observe it up close and to capture stunning photos and videos. These included pictures of the long-billed beauty plucking large worms from the sand (ph. T. Bradford, ph. v. P. Brown, ph. R. Heil, ph. E. Nielsen, ph. S. Sullivan*; 2010-36).

Neither of the previous records of juveniles—one in Ipswich September

21–22, 1985, and the other at Squantum September 5–20, 1991—have been reviewed by MARC (Veit & Petersen 1993).

Ivory Gull (*Pagophila eburnea*) [2,5+]

After Massachusetts's first two records since 1985—the second and third records of adults ever—were reported in January 2009, two more adults were found in January 2010. One spent January 14–17 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable* (ph. B. Porter, ph. B. Nikula, ph. J. P. Smith; 2010-06). The other stayed briefly at Richmond's Pond, Westport, *Bristol*, on January 23 (ph. H. Zimerlin*; 2010-05).

Although the reports possibly related to the same bird, the photos of the Westport bird were too distant to compare details like bill markings. However, reports from Quicksand Pond, Little Compton, *Newport*, Rhode Island, on the evening of January 23, and a subsequent Rhode Island report on January 27 from Easton's Pond, Middletown, *Newport*, likely pertained to the Westport bird moving west (note that the Quicksand Pond bird was photographed on the Massachusetts side of the line as well). The Commonwealth now has 14 records of this pack-ice specialist. Although the beautiful birds are certainly welcome on our shores, there is some concern that the spate of recent records, and the high ratio of adults to immatures, may be reflective of problems Ivory Gulls are facing in the Arctic, where global warming has impacted the extent and distribution of sea ice.

Ross's Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) [1,1+]

Commonly known in U.S. birding circles as the “bird of the century”—in the century in which birding took off as a popular hobby, no less—the first record of this pink-bellied arctic visitor to the lower 48 states drew birders by the hundreds to Newburyport Harbor, *Essex*, once news of its presence was made known on March 2, 1975 (ph. K. Able, ph. P. Alden, ph. P. & F. Buckley; 1974-02). It turns out the bird was actually originally seen on December 7, 1974, and January 12, 1975, but, as described by Miliotis & Buckley (1975), the initial finders were understandably incredulous of their own observations and awaited confirmation of their sighting before going public.

Once word got out, the birding world was never the same—birders got a sense of just how many fellow feather-enthusiasts there were when they found themselves amongst droves gawking at the Ross's. One committee member recalls seeing then Secretary of Defense James Slessinger jump from his car to spot the bird, accompanied by a security detail. It was Roger Tory Peterson's 668th bird for the U.S. and Canada. While most birders stayed respectfully distant, a cameraman for the Channel 7 News approached close, rewarding viewers of that night's broadcast with a rare opportunity to truly appreciate the bird's pink blush. The bird that changed birding remained in the area until May 6, 1975. Ross's Gull has been seen three subsequent times in the Commonwealth, sightings yet to be treated by the MARC. It is now known to breed sparingly in Canada and to rarely but regularly show up across the United States, even as far south as the Salton Sea in California (McCaskie & Garrett 2006).

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) [1,4+]

A bird described from Sandy Point, Plum Island, *Essex*, May 23, 2010 (†J. Nelson*; 2010-34), took two rounds of voting before all members were convinced to accept it, given the very early date. Although this bird is expected more often in summer and early fall, the May date was not unprecedented; there are three previous records in that month (Veit & Petersen 1993).

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) [4,11+]

Of the 28 records of White-winged Dove in Massachusetts, four are treated in this report and at least one additional 2010 record will be reviewed shortly. While an increase in feeders and improved communication of rare bird sightings may play a role in the recent increase of records, no doubt the numbers are primarily reflective of an actual increase in eastbound White-winged Doves as part of the species' overall population boom and expansion. Three records were of feeder birds: one in Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, *Worcester*, December 14, 2009–January 21, 2010 (ph. M. Szantyr; 2009-40); one in Ellisville, *Plymouth*, December 20, 2009 (ph. C. Goldthwaite*; 2009-41); and one in Chatham, *Barnstable*, January 8, 2010 (ph. B. Fletcher*; 2010-03). The one bird "in the wild" was an adult at the Eastham Stump Dump, Eastham, *Barnstable*, September 25, 2009 (ph. M. Faherty*; 2009-42).

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) [1,6+]

On October 30, 2010, Lanny McDowell found and superbly photographed a Say's Phoebe at Gay Head Cliffs, Aquinnah, *Dukes* (ph. L. McDowell*; 2010-38). The reasonably broad buffy wingbars age the bird as a juvenile, confirming that it was not the same bird that popped in on the Vineyard the prior September.

Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) [1,4]

Brian Tucker found a Bell's Vireo at the Nahant Stump Dump and Heritage Trail, Nahant, *Essex*, October 17, 2010, and it was seen briefly the following day as well (ph. M. Goetschkes; 2010-39). Photos indicated the bright yellow tones, greener back, and shorter tail of the eastern subspecies, *V. b. belli*. This is just the fourth state record of Bell's Vireo in Massachusetts; two were birds banded at Manomet, *Plymouth*, October 24–26, 2005 (2005-32), and September 8, 2006 (2006-22), and one was a crowd-pleaser at Falmouth, *Barnstable*, November 25–December 16, 2006 (2006-43).

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*)

A Yellow-throated Vireo was found dead in the wrack line at Race Point, *Barnstable*, on the record early date of March 31, 2010 (ph. D. Minsky, specimen to Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University; 2010-23). The strong southerlies around this time were conducive to early migration, but this record seems particularly early and should give some pause to those quick to dismiss April—or now March!—reports of Yellow-throated Vireos as misidentified Pine Warblers (*Dendroica pinus*).

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*) [1,14+]

The one visiting Capaum Pond, *Nantucket*, May 12–13, 2010, was significant as Massachusetts's first spring record (ph. V. Laux; 2010-11). Several members agreed that it appeared to be of the expanding southwestern race *P. f. pelodoma*. Prior to this, the only spring records this far north and east were of Caribbean *P. f. fulva* (or *P. f. cavicola*) from Nova Scotia (Tufts 1961). The recent population growth and expansion of Cave Swallows in Texas probably portends more spring records. The pattern is still not clear, however, so even though Cave Swallows were taken off MARC's review list effective January 1, 2011, we will continue to review spring records, just as we normally review particularly unseasonable records.

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) [1,6+]

A Northern Wheatear was quite a find during an August 26, 2009, beach walk at Crane Beach, *Essex* (ph. D. B. Jones*; 2009-48). Fantastic flight shots captured perfectly the T-shaped tail pattern that separates Northern from many other wheatears. The bird was an adult male (perhaps explaining the early date). It was somewhat buffy on the undertail coverts and almost certainly of the Greenland subspecies *O. o. leucorhoa*.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) [1,12+]

Fortunately the Townsend's Solitaire that spent January 12 through February 4, 2010, in a residential area of Yarmouthport, *Barnstable*, chose to frequent the yard of Peter Bono, who captured diagnostic photos and video of this delicate charmer (ph. v. P. Bono*; 2010-07). Only four of the state's 16 records pre-date 1993; none of those older records have been reviewed by MARC.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) [1,5+]

A female at a feeder in Palmer, *Hampden*, April 24–May 1, 2009, was the first Varied Thrush to linger in Massachusetts into May (ph. J. & K. Athearn*, ph. †S. Surner; 2009-46).

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) [1,2+]

One found by Brian Parker on January 11, 2010, at Salisbury State Park, Salisbury, *Essex*, remained until March 28 (although it went unrecorded from February 7 through March 17). It was remarkably cooperative—at least at times—posing for stunning pictures and delighting scores of birders (ph. R. Heil, ph. V. Laux, †B. Parker*, ph. S. Selesky; 2010-04). The January date of its discovery led some committee members to speculate that the bird may have arrived somewhere in the area earlier and remained undetected. This record marks only the third for the state

(the second accepted by MARC), and the only record outside of the expected late October–early November time frame.

Black-throated Gray Warbler
(Dendroica nigrescens) [2,7+]

Two Black-throated Gray Warblers were accepted, including an immature male/adult female photographed on September 11, 2010, in the junipers at Gay Head, *Dukes* (ph. L. McDowell*, ph. S. Whiting*; 2010-17), and a male of unknown age described from the



Sage Thrasher by Sandy Selesky

Middlesex Fells, *Middlesex*, on September 27, 2010 (†T. Pirro*; 2010-27). Although both birds were searched for on the following day, both were one-day wonders. The Vineyard bird was the second for *Dukes*, with the previous bird present at Vineyard Haven December 14–30, 1996 (1996-24). The Middlesex Fells bird was the third from that area, since Winchester has previous records from November 20–30, 1962, and October 11, 1970, neither of which have been reviewed by MARC (Veit & Petersen 1993).

Kirtland’s Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*)(1,1)

“Seriously, a Kirtland’s Warbler in Boston, almost 100 years ago?” That’s what ran through most committee members’ minds when presented with this record, until they read the careful description by Julia Sherman in a letter to Charles Maynard published in *Records of Walks and Talks with Nature* (Sherman 1917). The letter described a sighting by Sherman, her daughter Catherine, and Mrs. Hodgskins—all three top students of Maynard’s Saturday Bird Class—on May 26, 1916, in Roslindale, *Suffolk* (1916-02).

The write-up was a brilliant example of what many today lament as a lost art (one that we photo-hungry MARC members are probably guilty of not nurturing enough!), the ability to accurately, honestly, and comprehensively describe a bird sighting, with acute observations spanning from feather details to descriptions of size and behavior.

The *first* thing Mrs. Sherman mentioned was the large size, and Kirtland’s are indeed giants of the Parulidae. She then described key plumage details, which she was able to observe by getting within three feet of the bird. Most significantly, she described a “clean cut” bird with a white eye ring “bisected by a black line,” black and gray on the side of the head and cheek (indicating a male), a slight brownish cast to the back (suggesting a first spring male, the most likely candidate for vagrancy), black lines on the back and flanks, pale canary yellow belly fading to white undertail coverts, white spots on the ends of the outer tail feathers, and “dingy white” edged wing feathers, forming more linear stripes (a particularly subtle detail that lends credibility to the whole report).

Finally, Mrs. Sherman described the behavior, which was a critical selling point for many members. The bird was seen feeding low and often on the ground. While any warbler can feed on the ground, few do it consistently over prolonged observation. Even better, she was struck by the bird's persistent tail wagging. Three warblers (or four, but western Nashville [*Oreothlypis ruficapilla ridgwayi*] has more of a tail flick) persistently wag their tails: Palm (*Dendroica palmarum*), Prairie (*Dendroica discolor*), and Kirtland's. Nothing in the description suggests the bird was a Palm or Prairie.

Although no one suggested Mrs. Sherman would have faked the report, committee members found the description particularly compelling because few of the details, particularly with respect to behavior, would have been available in published sources at the time.

Troubling to committee members was the low population of Kirtland's Warblers overall and the paucity of records off the path of their migration between Michigan and the Bahamas. Committee members noted, however, that the population was likely much greater in 1916 than it is today, and certainly higher than it was during the population crash of the 1940s, which reached its nadir in the 1970s. In the early 20th century, in fact, the species' range included Ontario. Moreover, there is some precedent for vagrancy, albeit very little. A Kirtland's Warbler has been found in Bermuda in winter, and, most importantly, one was found and photographed by Trevor Persons on June 2, 2008 in Kennebunk Plains, York, Maine (Persens & Petrucha 2009). This was the record that spurred review of the Massachusetts bird and, especially considering the similar date, probably tipped the scales for accepting the Roslindale bird. (And in fact it was the Maine sighting that led Persons to dig up Sherman's letter and call it to our attention!) On a third round vote, one committee member maintained that such an unprecedented record by observers who were not familiar with this species needed more evidence, but the record still passed 7-1.

Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) [1,2+]

Massachusetts's fourth Swainson's Warbler, and the second for *Barnstable*, was a hatch-year bird (aged by skull ossification) that blundered into the nets at Wing Island, Brewster, on both September 6 and 10 (ph. Sue Finnegan; 2010-18). The fact that the bird could not be relocated by chasers between its two capture dates and the fact that half of Massachusetts's four records have been mist-netted birds, make it clear that some Swainson's Warblers surely are being overlooked.

Louisiana Waterthrush (*Parkesia motacilla*)

A rare and typically very early fall migrant, the one found by Don Wilkinson in the Boston Public Garden, Boston, *Suffolk*, October 1-4, 2002, marks the state's latest record by almost three weeks and only the second record after August. The bird put on a great show, allowing for diagnostic photos (ph. G. Tepke, †J. Trimble; 2002-48).

Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*) [1,6+]

A September 12, 2010, fallout on North Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, following a light northwest wind was made even sweeter for Carl Goodrich and Wayne Petersen

when they discovered this bull-headed, white-winged prairie sparrow in beachside scrub, one of its favorite habitats when on the East Coast (†W. Petersen*; 2010-33).

Le Conte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*) [1,9+]

The main dike cutting through Great Meadows NWR, Concord, *Middlesex*, served as Ammodramus Alley during the last week of October 2010, hosting a Grasshopper (*Ammodramus savannarum*), a Nelson's (*A. nelsoni*), and, on October 26, a Le Conte's sparrow (ph. R. Stymeist*; 2010-40). Although superb photos revealed no juvenal feathers on the LeConte's, the bird's age is uncertain because some hatch-years can acquire full adult plumage by this date.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) [2,6+]

One visiting a feeding station near Look's Pond, West Tisbury, *Dukes*, April 25–30, 2010 (†W. Manter, ph. N. Shaw Cramer*; 2010-09), marked the second spring record since 1979—the other visited a Truro, *Barnstable*, feeder on May 22, 1999 (*Bird Observer*, 27 (5): 288)—and the Vineyard's first ever at that season. Photos indicate the bird was a first-spring male, based on its brown wings, lack of solid back, and reduced red on head. A female found by Tim Factor high in the weeping willows at the Boston Public Garden, Boston, *Suffolk*, December 13–15, 2009, was seen on a more typical date and marked a first record for *Suffolk* (ph. R. Stymeist, ph. J. Trimble; 2009-43).

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) [3,5+]

Two records from East Orleans, *Barnstable*, raised same-bird issues for the committee and helped lead to the bylaw changes described in the introduction concerning the treatment of records pertaining to one or more birds. One female/immature male had a long stay at a feeder at Harborview Lane, East Orleans, *Barnstable*, December 7, 2009–January 16, 2010 (ph. M. Faherty; 2009-39), but many birders had to wait between appearances. On one of the days it was seen on Harborview Lane, December 13, 2009, Glenn d'Entremont described a brief encounter with a female/immature male about two miles away on Briar Spring Road, East Orleans, *Barnstable* (†G. d'Entremont*; 2009-47). Although little is known about the size of the suburban wintering territories of Painted Buntings, most committee members felt it was better to treat the two as separate records, given the distance between sites. Another Painted Bunting visited a feeder at East Falmouth, *Barnstable*, on January 5, 2010, farther west on the Cape. Photos revealed the male or female to be in its second year based on the contrast between its dull primary coverts and bright green primary covert edges (ph. J. and T. Brady*; 2010-02).

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*)

One adult photographed at Morning Glory Farm, Edgartown, *Dukes*, October 20, 2009, caused a stir until it was revealed that a nearby aviculturist had one Barnacle Goose missing (2009-37). While the MARC considers most Barnacle Geese in Massachusetts to be wild vagrants, eight committee members voted to reject the record based on the fairly early date, island presence and, most importantly, the nearby escapee. The incident served as a useful reminder that Barnacle Geese are kept

in captivity and merit caution in certain circumstances. Nonetheless, noted the lone committee dissenter who voted to accept the record on its second ballot, the burden of proof should fall on those claiming a domestic provenance. More than other European geese, Barnacle Geese have undergone a massive population increase, due partly to increased survival of birds wintering in beet fields, plus probably a climate change effect. See also Accepted Records.

Common Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*)

One that spent December 6–7, 2009 along the tide line in Nahant/Lynn/Swampscott, *Essex* (†M. Iliff, ph. D. Jones, †J. Malone*; 2009-38) proved the most controversial bird in this report. Identification of this first-winter bird



Common Shelduck by David Jones

(presumably male) was not controversial; the issue was provenance. Those supporting natural vagrancy argued that the date, age, and habitat (a coastal estuary near human habitation) were consistent with a wild bird, and they noted that a presumed vagrant first-winter female had been photographed in St. John's, Newfoundland, on November 17, 2009. The two dissenters argued that a pattern of natural vagrancy in eastern North America had not yet been

established and voted to reject the record on the grounds that natural occurrence was questionable. They indicated, however, that they'd be willing to revisit the record in the future if evidence of natural vagrancy to the Northeast coast emerges. The record failed on its third ballot, 6–2.

An earlier record, an adult photographed at Bass River, Dennis, *Barnstable*, January 24, 2004 (ph. B. Nikula*; 2004-43), went two rounds, failing 4–5 on the second. The Dennis bird mustered less support than the Nahant/Lynn/Swampscott one because it hadn't been tracked as closely (so could have been or remained in the area awhile) and because it was an adult (unlike geese and swans, vagrant ducks are more likely to be young birds). In addition, the European population was more modest in 2004.

Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*)

The committee revisited a previously accepted record of a *Pterodroma*, photographed at the southwest corner of Stellwagen Bank, *Barnstable*, April 22, 1991 (ph. S. Highley*; 1991-01) and initially identified and accepted by MARC as a Black-capped Petrel. Reexamination of the photos in light of recent advances in petrel identification and knowledge of their distribution convinced all nine committee members on the second ballot that Bermuda Petrel (also known as Cahow; *Pterodroma cahow*) could not be eliminated. Further voting will be conducted to determine if the record can be accepted as a Bermuda Petrel or as a Bermuda/Black-capped Petrel. Stay tuned!

Small albatross/Mollymawk sp. (*Thalassarche* sp.)

An intriguing report of an albatross being chased by gulls near Lynn Beach, *Essex*, June 27, 2010, ultimately lacked sufficient details to convince enough committee members and failed 2–7 on a second-round ballot. The minority of committee members in support noted the described actions seemed consistent with other recent Massachusetts albatross records—a bird hugging the coast and getting mobbed by gulls in the process. Few other birds draw such a Hitchcockian reaction.

White Ibis (*Eudocimus albus*)

A report of three adult White Ibis seen by two observers while they were crossing the Bourne Bridge over the Cape Cod Canal, *Barnstable*, September 5, 1998 (1998-32), was submitted from memory in 2010. Records based solely on submissions written after the fact are difficult for the Committee. Here the twelve-year gap between the sighting and the write-up, combined with the rarity of three adult White Ibis in New England (most New England records pertain to lone immatures), and questions as to how long the birds possibly could have been in view (even granting it was the Saturday of Labor Day weekend!), were the reasons provided by the three detractors. The majority of the Committee supported the record due to the strength of the described field marks, the observers' experience with the species, and the relative distinctiveness of the species. Even though it failed 5–3, this submission was a good indication of the usefulness of eBird in drumming up unusual records. It was only upon entering the report into eBird that the finder was prompted to submit details.

Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*)

A report of Western Wood-Pewee seen, photographed, and heard giving a few calls among the net lanes at Manomet Center for Conservation Science, *Plymouth*, September 25, 2009 (2009-49), was unanimously rejected on the second round. Although some characteristics (e.g., dark mandible, dusky spots on undertail coverts) were suggestive of Western Wood-Pewee, some Committee members felt the very white-breasted appearance better matched Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*). The short call notes heard by the observers were intriguing, but it is generally extremely difficult to register and describe such brief sounds. The committee was concerned, especially, with the great variation in Eastern Wood-Pewee calls and the scant knowledge of the exact range of such variation. Old specimens purported to pertain to Western Wood-Pewee and discussed by Veit and Petersen (1993) were destroyed by beetles and cannot be verified (Rines 2008), so the species remains without an accepted state record. Although the species has been intermittently reported in the East in fall, most records lack truly convincing documentation; documenting Western Wood-Pewee in Massachusetts may require a specimen or diagnostic voice recording.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*)

An Ash-throated Flycatcher reported from South Monomoy Island, Chatham, *Barnstable*, September 14, 1997, was accepted unanimously by the Committee in its third report (Petersen 1998; 1997-24) despite the remarkably early date (most Ash-throated Flycatchers in the Northeast occur from late October to January) and its aberrant (leucistic) plumage. Jeremiah Trimble was one of the observers of the record,

and when he reviewed the photos of the bird in 2010, he realized that a mistake had been made. He resubmitted the record with reasoning for why he believed it pertained to a Great Crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*). Blair Nikula, the other observer on the initial record, agreed, writing in his comments: "I don't know what I was smoking on 9/14/97...but this bird was quite clearly a Great Crested Flycatcher. It is a disturbing and humbling (but hopefully rare) example of how easily one (or several) can wander astray without a close and critical examination." The Committee unanimously agreed (again) with the re-identification as Great Crested.

This record serves as a valuable lesson for the importance of record documentation and archiving through the Committee process. All birders make mistakes, and in this case the mistaken included all of the MARC members who validated the initial submission as Ash-throated. The archiving of the original photos and documentation, however, made it possible to easily reassess the record to arrive at the correct identification. Had Trimble and Nikula not provided such detailed evidence for their 1997 claim, this record might persist in the record books as Massachusetts' earliest-ever Ash-throated Flycatcher. 🐦

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A Soup-lips by Any Other Name

Paul Fitzgerald

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. Genesis 2:19

One morning in 2000, birders awoke to discover that the official common name of Oldsquaw had magically changed overnight to Long-Tailed Duck by decree from the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Committee on Classification and Nomenclature.

Coincidentally, right around that time, I was on a long drive with two close birder friends (where and why I no longer recall), and one of us produced a 1936 edition of *Birds of America* (numbering among its editors local legend Edward H. Forbush.) *Birds of America* was first published in 1917, a mere thirty years after the very first AOU checklist of North American birds, and long before that list had been universally adopted by hunters, farmers, or even naturalists. Each species account in the book began with a list of anywhere from a couple to a couple dozen alternate and colloquial names, because well into the twentieth century, many North American birds—especially waterfowl and shorebirds—were still known by a wide and colorful array of regional names. One species of duck could have a half-dozen different names just around Delaware Bay.

Fresh with indignation at the sudden and suspect appearance of Long-tailed Duck in our lives, we immediately looked up “Old-Squaw” and to our delight found it to have once enjoyed no less than twenty-two different names, including Squeaking Duck, Old Injin, Uncle Huldy, John Connolly, and Cockawee. (Later, I even found it listed in another old source as Mammy Duck. Talk about politically incorrect!!) Our only protest could be to adopt one of these as our own.

The precision and gravitas of the modern AOU checklist, essential as it is to conservation science, suddenly seemed hopelessly stiff and colorless in contrast to the giddy, freeform nomenclature we'd uncovered.

From that moment we began assembling our own alternate and irreverent checklist of Massachusetts birds, vowing to commit it to memory so that we could publicly bellow out baffling and esoteric ID's to one another to the consternation of our fellow birders. We tested each candidate name out loud, simulating field conditions. “Anyone else on this High Hole?” (howls of laughter) or “I've got a Chucklehead in the *Spartina*!” (more howls). Our selection criteria were sophomoric. Anything obliquely sexual or excretory, or that mentioned mud, squatting, or sucking was instantly accepted. We sought out names that inaccurately invoked the names of unrelated species (Sea Robin and Beach Quail spring to mind); for a while we tried to

find a way to list every shorebird as some kind of snipe. The only firm rule was that the replacement name had to have appeared in print at some point in time.

The checklist project continued for weeks and then months, drawing on many more old and obscure textbooks and field guides borrowed from friends or pulled from the dusty bottom shelves of my local library, until finally we had a reconstructed checklist worthy of Beavis and Butthead. Our dreams of public gibberish never quite sprouted wings though, since both my co-conspirators moved out of state not long after. My son and I though have, to some extent, honored the effort. Sheep Rack, Coffin-backs, and Skunkheads are as much a part of our private birding vernacular as the Dufflebags and Golden-guys we tally on winter duck counts.

Here now, for your edification is our revised, unofficial checklist of the birds of Massachusetts.

AOU #	Band Code	Common Name			
			58	COGO	Garrot
			59	BAGO	Rocky Mountain Garrot
6	SNGO	White Wavy	61	HOME	Hairyhead
9	BRAN	Rat Goose	62	COME	Wheezzer
15	CAGO	Bay Goose	63	RBME	Stud Duck
19	MUSW	Royal Swan	65	RUDU	Sleepy Duck
21	TUSW	Whistling Swan	66	NOBO	Texas Partridge
23	WODU	Acorn Duck	68	RUGR	Mountain Pheasant
24	GADW	Sand Wigeon	70	WITU	Mexican Turkey
25	EUWI	Swamp Wigeon	71	RTLO	Cape Drake
26	AMWI	Diamond Duck	75	COLO	Guinea Duck
28	ABDU	Dusky Duck	78	PBGR	Water Witch
29	MALL	French Duck	79	HOGR	Hell-diver
30	BWTE	White-face	80	RNGR	Holboel's Diver
32	NSHO	Soup-lips	88	NOFU	Molly Hawk
33	NOPI	Sea Wigeon	90	COSH	Grew Gull
36	GWTE	Mud Teal	92	GRSH	Hag
39	CANV	Whiteback	94	SOSH	Black Hag
40	REDH	Fiddler Duck	96	MASH	Cleaver
41	RNDU	Blackhead	105	WISP	Sea Martin
43	GRSC	Big Blackhead	107	LESP	Carey Chicken
44	LESC	Little Blackhead	113	NOGA	Bass Goose
47	KIEI	King Duck	117	DCCO	Taunton Turkey
48	COEI	Wamp	118	GRCO	Coal Goose
50	HADU	Sea Mouse	121	AMBI	Thunderpump
51	SUSC	Box Coot	122	LEBI	Chalkline
52	WWSC	Channel Duck	123	GBHE	Big Cranky
53	BLSC	Smutty Coot	125	GREG	White Crane
56	LTDU	Oldsquaw	128	SNEG	Short White
57	BUFF	Woolhead	130	LBHE	Blue Egret

131	TCHE	Louisiana Heron	217	SAND	Ruddy Plover
133	CAEG	Buff-backed Heron	218	SESA	Sand Snipe
134	GRHE	Pond Scoggin	219	WESA	Sand Peep
135	BCNH	Buttermunk	223	LESA	Pea Snipe
136	YCNH	Crabcracker	224	WRSA	White-tailed Stib
138	GLIB	Black Curlew	225	BASA	Bull Peep
141	BLVU	Black Buzzard	226	PESA	Fat-bird
142	TUVU	John Crow	228	PUSA	Rock Plover
143	OSPR	Fish Hawk	229	DUNL	Simpleton
147	BAEA	Black Eagle	232	CUSA	Pigmy Curlew
149	NOHA	Bog Hawk	233	STSA	Frost Snipe
150	SSHA	Bullet Hawk	235	BBSA	Robin Snipe
151	COHA	Mexican Hawk	236	RUFF	Sea Herring
152	NOGO	Chicken Hawk	237	SBDO	German Snipe
153	RSHA	Winter Hawk	239	LBDO	Kelp Plover
154	BWHA	Broad-winged Buzzard	241	WISN	Gutter Snipe
157	RTHA	Buzzard	242	AMWO	Blind Snipe
158	RLHA	Mouse Hawk	243	WIPH	Needle-billed Snipe
159	GOEA	Royal Eagle	244	RNPH	Chinese Pheasant
162	AMKE	Kitty Hawk	244	RNPH	Fairy Duck
164	MERL	Pigeon Hawk	245	REPH	Sea Snipe
167	GYRF	Iceland Falcon	247	BLKI	Jack Gull
168	PEFA	Duck Hawk	249	SAGU	Hawk-tailed Gull
171	CLRA	Sedge Hen	250	BOGU	Sea Pigeon
172	KIRA	Meadow Hen	251	BHGU	Sea Maw
174	VIRA	Marsh Hen	252	LIGU	Brimfugol
175	SORA	Mud Hen	254	LAGU	Mackerel Gull
177	COMO	Stank Hen	259	RBGU	Lake Gull
178	AMCO	Blue Peter	262	HEGU	Harbor Gull
181	BBPL	Chucklehead	265	ICGU	Iceland Scorie
183	AGPL	Toad-head	267	LBBG	Gray Gull
188	SEPL	Beach Bird	270	GLGU	Ice Gull
189	PIPL	Clam-bird	273	GBBG	Turkey Gull
190	KILL	Noisy Plover	279	LETE	Little Striker
192	AMOY	Sea Crow	281	CATE	Imperial Tern
196	SPSA	Sand Lark	282	BLTE	Surinam Tern
197	SOSA	Marsh Snipe	284	ROST	McDougall's Tern
200	GRYE	Yelper	285	COTE	Summer Gull
201	WILL	Duck Snipe	288	ARTE	Sea Swallow
204	LEYE	Bay Snipe	289	FOTE	Havel's Tern
206	UPSA	Prairie Pigeon	290	ROYT	Cayenne Tern
208	WHIM	Curlew Snipe	297	BLSK	Scissorbill
212	HUGO	Field Marlin	298	GRSK	Bonxie
214	MAGO	Red Marlin	299	SPSK	Sea Hawk
215	RUTU	Maggot Snipe	301	POJA	Jiddy Hawk
216	REKN	Beach Quail	302	PAJA	Dung Hunter

303	LTJA	Whip-tail	403	NSHR	Butcherbird
306	DOVE	Sea Dove	405	WEVI	White-eyed Greenlet
307	COMU	Sea Hen	407	YTVI	Yellow-throated Greenlet
308	TBMU	Franks' Murre			
310	RAZO	Tinker	410	BHVI	Cassin's Greenlet
311	BLGU	Sea Turtle	411	WAVI	Warbling Greenlet
315	ATPU	Old Wife	412	PHVI	Philadelphia Greenlet
319	ROPI	Street Pigeon	413	REVI	Preacher
324	MODO	Wood Dove	415	BLJA	Blue Coat
326	MOPA	Quaker	417	AMCR	Crow
328	YBCU	Storm Crow	418	FICR	Florida Crow
329	BBCU	Rain Crow	419	CORA	Mexican Raven
331	BNOW	Monkey Owl	420	HOLA	Shore Lark
332	EASO	Mouse Owl	421	PUMA	Black Martin
333	GHOW	Virginia Owl	424	TRSW	Stump Swallow
334	SNOW	Ghost Owl	426	NRWS	Gully Martin
337	BDOW	Swamp Owl	427	BANS	Sand Martin
339	LEOW	Cat Owl	428	CLSW	Mud Swallow
340	SEOW	Bog Owl	431	BARS	Jug Swallow
342	NSWO	Blind Owl	434	BCCH	Yukon Chickadee
343	CONI	Bull-bat	435	BOCH	Acadian Chickadee
344	CHUC	Great Bat	436	TUTI	Tomtit
345	WHIP	Mosquito Hawk	437	RBNU	Canada Nuthatch
347	CHSW	Chimney Bat	438	WBNU	Tree Mouse
350	RTHU	Common Hummingbird	439	BRCR	Mexican Creeper
358	BEKI	Halcyon	441	CAWR	Mocking Wren
360	RHWO	White-wing	443	HOWR	Apache Wren
361	RBWO	Guinea Sapsucker	444	WIWR	Mouse Wren
362	YBSA	Squealer	445	SEWR	Grass Wren
363	DOWO	Little Guinea	446	MAWR	Cattail Wren
364	HAWO	Big Guinea	447	GCKI	Flamecrest
367	NOFL	High-hole	448	RCKI	Ruby-crowned Regulus
368	PIWO	Log Cock	449	BGGN	Sylvan Flycatcher
369	OSFL	Nuttall's Pewee	451	EABL	Blue Robin
371	EAWP	Pewee Flycatcher	454	VEER	Tawny Thrush
372	YBFL	Yellow-breasted Hyliota	455	GCTH	Alice's Thrush
373	ACFL	Green Flycatcher	458	SWTH	Olive-backed Thrush
374	ALFL	Traill's Flycatcher	459	HETH	Swamp Robin
375	WIFL	Little Flycatcher	460	WOTH	Wood Robin
377	LEFL	Little Tyrant Flycatcher	463	AMRO	Redbreast
383	EAPH	Dusky Flycatcher	465	GRCA	Black Mockingbird
387	GCFL	Northern Crested Flycatcher	466	NOMO	Mocking Thrush
			468	BRTH	Red Mavis
397	WEKI	Arkansas Flycatcher	469	EUST	Sheep Rack
398	EAKI	Bee Martin	470	AMPI	Titlark
402	LOSH	French Mockingbird	473	CWAX	Cherry-bird

475	BWWA	Blue-winged Swamp Warbler	534	VESP	Grass Finch
			535	LASP	Quail-head
475	BWWA	Small-billed Creeper	538	SASP	Ground Sparrow
476	GWWA	Golden-winged Flycatcher	540	GRSP	Quail Sparrow
			543	NESP	Sharp-tailed Finch
479	TEWA	Swamp Warbler	544	SMSP	Acadian Sparrow
480	OCWA	Dusky Warbler	547	SESP	Meadow Chippy
481	NAWA	Birch Warbler	549	FOSP	Ferruginous Finch
483	NOPA	Finch Creeper	550	SOSP	Swamp Finch
484	YEWA	Rathbone Warbler	552	LISP	Lincoln's Finch
485	CSWA	Quebec Warbler	553	SWSP	Swamp Finch
486	MAWA	Spotted Warbler	554	WTSP	Canada Sparrow
487	CMWA	Cape May Wood Warbler	556	WCSP	White-crown
			559	DEJU	Black Snowbird
488	BTBW	Blue Flycatcher	564	LALO	Alaska Longspur
489	YRWA	Myrtle Warbler	567	SNBU	Snowbird
492	BTGW	Wayne's Warbler	568	SUTA	Bee Bird
495	BKBW	Torchbird	569	SCTA	Firebird
497	PIWA	Pine Creeper	571	NOCA	Virginia Nightingale
498	PRAW	Prairie Wood Warbler	572	RBGR	Throat-cut
499	PAWA	Yellow Red-poll	574	BLGR	Blue Pop
502	BBWA	Chocolate-breast Titmouse	576	INBU	Blue Canary
			578	DICK	Rice Bird
503	BKPW	Autumnal Warbler	579	BOBO	Oatbird
504	CERW	Blue Warbler	580	RWBL	Crimson-winged Troopial
506	AMRE	Fire-tail			
507	PROW	Golden Warbler	581	EAME	Mexican Starling
508	WEWA	Forrest Chippy	583	YHBL	Copperhead
510	OVEN	Nightwalker	584	RUBL	Rusty Crow
511	NOWA	New York Warbler	586	COGR	Crow Blackbird
512	LOWA	Water Wagtail	591	BHCO	Cow Bunting
513	KEWA	Kentucky Wagtail	592	OROR	Basket Bird
514	COWA	Tamarack Warbler	594	BAOR	Fire-bird
515	MOWA	Philadelphia Warbler	598	PIGR	Mope
518	COYE	Ground Warbler	599	PUFI	Gray Linnet
519	HOWA	Black-headed Warbler	601	HOFI	Linnet
520	WIWA	Black-capped Warbler	603	RECR	Mexican Crossbill
521	CAWA	Bonaparte's Flycatcher	604	WWCR	Shell Apple
523	YBCH	Yellow Mockingbird	605	CORE	Red-headed Linnet
527	EATO	Turkey Sparrow	608	PISI	Pine Linnet
529	ATSP	Arctic Chipper	610	AMGO	Thistle-bird
530	CHSP	Hair-bird	612	EVGR	Sugar Bird
531	CCSP	Shattuck's Bunting	613	HOSP	Cock Sparrow 
533	FISP	Field Bunting			

From USFWS: Wetlands Grants for Migratory Birds

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar announced recently that the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission approved spending more than \$3 million from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to protect an estimated 1600 acres of waterfowl habitat on 3 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Commission also approved \$23.5 million in federal funding for grants to conserve more than 139,000 acres of wetlands and associated habitats in Canada through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA).

“Protecting North America’s wetlands—which provide so many ecological, economic, and social benefits—is crucial,” said Salazar, who chairs the Commission. “Besides providing habitat for fish, wildlife, and a variety of plants, wetlands are nurseries for many saltwater and freshwater fish and shellfish of commercial and recreational importance, and they provide hunting, fishing and other wildlife viewing opportunities for millions of Americans.”

The NAWCA Standard Grants awarded today will support six Canadian projects to benefit ducks, geese, and other migratory birds on more than 139,000 acres in 12 provinces and territories. Partners will contribute more than \$23.5 million in matching non-federal dollars toward these projects.

Each year, the Commission pre-approves the total amount of funding to be distributed to Small Grants projects in the next fiscal year. Final project selection authority is delegated to the Council, which then reports its selections back to the Commission. For fiscal year 2011, the Commission authorized up to \$5 million to fund projects under the Small Grants program.

An example of projects funded with NAWCA Small Grants in fiscal year 2011:

New Hampshire: Pawtuckaway River Greenway, Phase II

Grantee: Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire. This project will expand a block of conservation land along the Pawtuckaway River by acquiring and protecting a large, unfragmented parcel of land. Protecting this parcel will preserve important wetland resources; protect diverse habitat for waterfowl, wetland birds, and other migratory birds; and provide public access for outdoor recreation, including hiking, skiing, fishing, and hunting. These shallow marsh wetlands and associated uplands provide nesting, foraging, and migratory habitat for mallard and wood duck and migrating American woodcock, among other species.

For every dollar spent on Federal Duck Stamps, ninety-eight cents goes directly to purchase vital habitat for protection in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission oversees the use of Federal Duck Stamp funds for the purchase and lease of these wetland habitats for national wildlife refuges. To date, more than 5.3 million acres of wetlands have been purchased using more than \$750 million in Duck Stamp revenue. [Ed. note: See the inside back cover of *Bird Observer* for the new Duck Stamp and then go buy one!]

Discovery of a Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) Nest in Berkshire County, Massachusetts

Matt Kelly

On Sunday, May 29, 2011, I was on a nature ramble in the Town of Mount Washington, Massachusetts, with Professor Thomas Tynning, of Berkshire Community College, and Feroze Omardeen, MD, of Port of Spain, Trinidad. The day was warm, with temperatures reaching around 77°F. We had picked our way up a mountain, starting through evergreen forest with predominantly eastern hemlock and eastern white pine. As we gained in elevation, the forest changed to predominately mixed hardwoods, dominated by red oak, beech, black cherry, and an occasional black birch. The mountain's peak was just over 1800 feet in elevation and turned to predominately bare outcropping cliffs as the elevation increased. Below the sheer area, we picked our way down a scree slope interspersed with large boulders.

As we descended, we spotted a Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*), perched on the rocks about seventy-five yards below us. She eyed us warily before taking flight just seconds after being spotted. Our first thought was that there must be a nest nearby; why else would that bird be up here, and on the ground?

We sidled our way down to the area the bird had just vacated. Due to the fallen boulders and talus there were a number of rock cavities in this area. The vulture had been sitting on the edge of a large, flat, rock flake, roughly ten feet wide by sixteen feet long that projected from the hillside, forming a shelter underneath, with two very narrow openings, one on each side.

I squeezed my way into one of the openings but I could see nothing. I then investigated about eight more nearby cavities, finding some potential, sheltered nesting areas, but no birds and no nest. I returned to the first cavity and squeezed in a bit further. I still saw nothing, but upon taking a deep breath I detected a faint foul odor, like a mix of dirty diapers, sour bird manure, and something rotten. There were no signs of bird dung anywhere though, not even the slightest bit of "whitewash" inside or out. This made it quite difficult to determine by sight where a nest could be. After rechecking the other nearby cavities smelling nothing but dried leaves, I returned again to the first cavity.

This time I brought my digital camera, with automatic focus and the flash on. When I had wriggled in, as far as I could go, I reached the camera out ahead of me, past a raised rock area where I couldn't see, and took several photos down inside the cavity.

The first photos revealed two baby Turkey Vultures, covered in pure white, downy fuzz. We discovered that the other "entrance" was easier to negotiate, and allowed me to get even closer to the chicks. One sat upright and hissed at me, while the other seemed tired, and lay on its side, occasionally raising its head lazily for a disdainful look at me. I took several more photos.



Turkey Vulture chicks—all photos by the author

The nest was situated in the mixed hardwoods area, facing south, at an elevation of about 1500 feet. The average height inside the nest chamber was about eighteen inches. The distance from the “entrance” below one side of the flat rock to the nest itself was about ten feet, and about fourteen feet in from the other side. Both entrances were very narrow. The nest inside was hidden behind a large boulder holding up the roof. The area where the chicks were situated was about twenty-two inches in height. The “nest” also appeared to have had no additional work done by the parent birds to modify the ground. It was just a dry spot covered by leaves—mostly red oak—that had apparently blown in. There was no bird manure around the nest: none. The only visible whitewash was underneath the chicks. From the outside, through either entrance, the nest was in no way visible, and there were no clues to betray its presence, except for the faint smell described earlier.

I saw no evidence of broken eggshells. The chicks appeared to be about equal in size, both approximately four and a half inches tall. They had fluffy, brilliant white down covering most of their bodies, although around the eyes, through the facial area, and in a thin line along their neck to the crop was bare black skin. Under the chin and on the tips of their burgeoning wings, the skin was more salmon or dark pinkish. The eyes appeared to me as watery blue-black. I did not see their bellies or feet. There was no evidence of pin feathers, which emerge about seventeen days after hatching (Bent, 1937). Tiring quickly, both the chicks soon laid down and seemed to doze, leading me to believe that they were very young.



Turkey Vulture chick



At no time during our observation did any adult bird fly near or make any protestations to our presence at the nest. I did see an adult fly near the spot on the hillside after we were a long way down the mountain and far from the nest.

Range in the Northeast:

The Turkey Vulture is apparently a recent resident to New England. Hoffmann (1904) never mentions them. Forbush (1927) notes many casual and sporadic sightings in New England. Some records date back to the 1870s, 80s and 90s and find them as far north as Ontario, New Brunswick, Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Prior to 1875, he reports a Turkey Vulture “taken” in Eutaw, Vermont. At the time of his writing, Forbush surmised that Turkey Vultures in New England were probably more common in the past. He notes, “Probably it would be more common here today were it not for the fact that the moment one appears, several ignoramuses are likely to take after it with guns.” He notes many incidental sightings in Massachusetts, but the most northerly sightings were in the western part of the state.

Bent (1937) says Turkey Vultures were established as far northwest as British Columbia, but that along the Eastern Seaboard they mostly appear from New Jersey on south. But he does report them seen, even possibly breeding, in western and southern New York.

In Berkshire County, Massachusetts, Faxon & Hoffmann (1900) list the Turkey Vulture as “Bird #134” and describe it as “Accidental visitant.” “One was shot in Williamstown by Alfred J. Rowell, on January 9, 1891. Mr. Rowell told us that the bird was first seen about the place the day before he shot it. The specimen is now in Mr. William Brewster’s collection.” Hendricks reports some rare and scattered individual sightings in Berkshire County, mostly in the Sheffield area, prior to 1941. In that year a record seven Turkey Vultures were recorded seen at one time.

Breeding in the Northeast:

Bent cites a nest “in a cave in New York State” in 1923 and notes that breeding had been observed in Westchester County and Central New York. Forbush reports only one New England nest in all his findings, on June 8, 1925, in Stamford, CT, about one mile from the New York border. I could find no other early records of nesting in and around New England.

Veit and Petersen report that the first known nest in Massachusetts was in Tyringham in 1954. By 1974, Bull reports them breeding in central New York and southwestern Massachusetts, “although very rare.” He gives no specifics regarding the Massachusetts sightings and may be referring to the 1954 Tyringham nest reported in Veit and Petersen. Tom Tynning was shown a nest with two young present in Westfield, MA, in 1976. It is believed that the Turkey Vulture may be a more common breeder here, but since the finding of a nest is so rare, little data has been available. The nest in this report may be just the second known for Berkshire County.

All these recent authors, along with Hendricks (1994), report that the Turkey Vulture continues to increase in sightings and has become a fairly common migrant. These masters of flight can now be seen regularly soaring through the Berkshires as far north as Williamstown, all over Berkshire County, and east throughout the Commonwealth. It is only a matter of time before more nests are found in the Berkshires. 🦅

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Matt Kelly has a life-long interest in natural history. He works for his family's business, Kelly Enterprises, and is based in New Ashford, MA, with his wife, Mary. He is the current President of the Hoffmann Bird Club of Western Mass. <<http://www.hoffmannbirdclub.org>>. He thanks Professor Tynning for assistance with this article.



TURKEY VULTURE BY DAVID LARSON

ABOUT BOOKS

Birds of Brazil

Peter Alden

BIRDS OF BRAZIL: The Pantanal and Cerrado of Central Brazil. John A. Gwynne, Robert S. Ridgely, Guy Tudor, and Martha Argel. Wildlife Conservation Society & Comstock/Cornell University Press, 2010. \$35



One can easily document a half dozen penguins and a dozen seabirds on Antarctic and Galapagos cruises. Several hundred species can be seen on popular trips to mainland Belize, Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, and Peru. Quick. Where's the best place on the Latin American mainland to see and photograph the greatest number of large and colorful birds? The correct answer is the Pantanal of southwestern Brazil.

The "pantanal" is the world's largest freshwater wetland. It lies to the south of the great Amazon rain forest adjacent to Bolivia and Paraguay. To the east and north are the wooded savannas of the "cerrado" of the upraised Brazilian plateau. The southern summer rains from November to March flow off the plateau and gradually flood the flat pantanal from north to south before joining the Parana River system (to Buenos Aires).

A mosaic of rivers, forested islands, seasonally flooded marshes, grasslands, and savannas play host to fabulous numbers and varieties of waterbirds, raptors, songbirds, and lots of the world's greatest parrot, the spectacular blue Hyacinth Macaw. Add in masses of capybaras, coatis, caimans, and anacondas, herds of marsh and pampas deer, and dashes of jaguars, giant anteaters, and Brazilian tapirs and you have what is now called the "American Serengeti" (or to me the "Latin American Okavango Delta" with similar hydrology).

Today there are a dozen wonderful ecolodges, many on vast working cattle ranches, with local bird/wildlife guides and viewing vehicles/boats. An increasing number of bird tour outfits now offer Pantanal and Brazil tours. Brazil is booming at nearly 10% GNP a year and has paid off all its foreign debt. Things work well, though a bit expensive due to our weak dollar.

Brazil as a birding destination has long suffered from a lack of a good paper field guide. An assortment of incomplete or poorly illustrated tomes finally gave way to Ber van Perlo's *A Field Guide to the Birds of Brazil*, Oxford University Press, 2009. It has a brief text, range map, and color illustrations of all 1800-plus Brazilian birds. Most Latin American field guides cover way too many birds in way too many life zones and are bewildering to all but the hardcore.

The new series of regional field guides within Brazil, sponsored by Wildlife Conservation Society, are the first to break out just those birds found in one region. Weeding out more than a thousand species not found in this important part of Brazil and a simultaneous Portuguese edition allows both residents and visitors to this area to get a handle on local birdlife. The superb team of Gwynne, Ridgely, and Tudor (all with New England ties) has produced a ground-breaking field guide with superb artwork, excellent text, and useful regional range maps. It is a delight to thumb through and makes you want to wing your way to Rio and bounce on over to Cuiaba or Campo Grande to witness these avian treasures yourself. Hopefully this is a forerunner of similar, lighter weight, full-color field guides to regions within so many other species-rich countries. 🐦

Peter Alden of Concord, Mass., has been scouting and leading bird & wildlife tours to 100 countries for nearly 50 years, including many of the first ones to Latin America. He has authored fifteen bird and biodiversity books, with sales past two million. Locally he is a past president of both the Nuttall Ornithological Club and the Brookline Bird Club and co-compiler of both the Concord and Groton Christmas Bird Counts.



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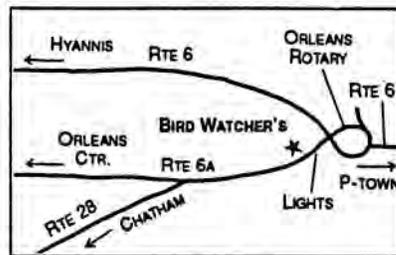
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BIRD SIGHTINGS

January/February 2011

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

With the exception of New Year's Day, January was colder than normal, with an average temperature in Boston of 27.6°, 1.7° below the average. The high was a balmy 56° on New Year's Day, 15° above average, followed by another warm day on January 2, but it was downhill for the rest of the month. The month's low was -2° on January 24, the first zero reading in Boston since January 22, 2005. January saw 38.3 inches of snow, 25.7 inches above average! The most in one day was 14.6 inches in a violent nor'easter on January 12; very heavy snow and high seas caused severe coastal damage. A second nor'easter dumped nearly 10 inches on January 26–27. Rainfall totaled 4.57 inches, almost an inch above average.

February continued the trend of cold and snowy weather. The average temperature in Boston was 30.5°, 1.0° below normal and 2.7° colder than February 2010. The January thaw waited until mid-February when the mercury hit 60° on February 17–18. Rainfall measured 4.57 inches, the same amount that fell in January in Boston. It was another big month for snow, with 18.5 inches in Boston, 7.0 inches over the average and 11.5 inches more than the same period last year. The seasonal total was 78.8 inches, 46.2 inches above normal.

WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

The goose extravaganza of November and December 2010 was dimmed by the disappearance of the Pink-footed Goose after the post-Christmas snows, but good numbers of **Greater White-fronted Geese** continued to be reported, and the **Ross's Goose** that was discovered on Nantucket on December 11 continued at least through February 17.

Dabbling ducks were reported primarily in coastal locations, not surprising given that the unusually cold weather froze most ponds. **Redheads** were reported from five locations, including a single from landlocked Wachusett Reservoir at the beginning of January. King Eiders were reported only from Cape Ann, an unusual statistic for this season. Barrow's Goldeneye was well reported, including several inland birds.

Reports of **Pacific Loon** were received from Provincetown, Salisbury, and Rockport. This species is notoriously difficult to identify, but all were seen by experienced observers.

Because Black Vultures have been sighted regularly in the southwestern part of the state since 1999, a report of six in Sheffield was not unusual, but there were also reports of one or two individuals from six other locations. An Osprey in Lowell on January 13 was extremely unusual. Bald Eagles are increasingly becoming routine in winter; the 2011 eagle count conducted by MassWildlife came to 107 eagles throughout the state, breaking the previous high of 81 in 2009. It was a moderately good winter for Rough-legged Hawks, with the best numbers coming from traditional locations such as Plum Island, Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Cumberland Farm fields.

An American Oystercatcher that spent much of the reporting period at Oak Bluffs was an unusual winter visitor, but a Spotted Sandpiper seen during a waterfowl survey off Manchester appears to be the latest on record. Wilson's Snipes were unusually well reported for such a cold winter. The first American Woodcock displays were seen on schedule at the end of February.

As usual, Nantucket was gull central, with excellent numbers reported on a New Year's Day count. The only **Mew Gull** of the reporting period was discovered on Lynn Beach the last day of February (and subsequently photographed in March). Marjorie Rines

Greater White-fronted Goose				1/29	Newbypt	1640	J. Trimble
1/8-9	Sharon	1	J. Baur + v.o.	2/5	Montague	280	I. Davies
1/9-30	E. Boston/Winthrop	1	J. Taylor	2/26	Millbury	238	M. Lynch#
1/10	Marion	1 juv	M. Maurer		Northern Shoveler		
1/15	Fairhaven	1	M. Lynch#	1/thr	Lynn	1 m	v.o.
2/19-20	Chappaquiddick	10	E. Potter + v.o.	1/thr	Marlboro	1 m	N. Paulson
Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose				1/2	Nantucket	3	J. Trimble
1/2-5	Newbypt H.	1	R. Heil# + v.o.	1/2	Milford	1 m	N. Paulson
Snow Goose				1/7	Salisbury	11	S. McGrath
1/1	Truro	2	C. Thompson	1/22-30	Winthrop	1 m	P. Peterson
1/1	Boston (F.Pk)	1	P. Peterson	1/29	Newbypt	1	G. Lawrence#
1/3-2/28	Plymouth	4	M. Faherty	2/thr	Marstons Mills	1	v.o.
1/25-2/6	Orleans	1	C. Thompson	2/4	Brookline	1	R. Schain
2/26	Nantucket	5	T. Pastuszak	2/19	Fall River	5	L. Abbey
2/26	Dighton	1	J. Sweeney		Northern Pintail		
Ross's Goose				thr	P.I.	51 max	v.o.
1/1-2/17	Nantucket	1	J. Trimble + v.o.	1/2, 2/12	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	4, 7	P. Champlin#
Brant				1/8	Westport	6	BBC (R. Stymeist)
1/2	E. Boston (B.I.)	80	P. Peterson	1/15	Sudbury	4	G. Dysart
1/9	Boston H.	721	TASL (M. Hall)	2/15	Turners Falls	3	Z. Jakub
1/10	Marion	200	M. Maurer	2/21	Ipswich	5	J. Berry#
1/15	Fairhaven	242	M. Lynch#	2/26	Wareham	6	V. Zollo#
1/30	Plymouth	210	M. Lynch#	2/26	Cumb. Farms	7	V. Zollo#
2/17	W. Dennis	123	B. Zajda#	2/27	Fairhaven	4	SSBC (GdE)
2/20	Winthrop	70	P. + F. Vale		Green-winged Teal		
Mute Swan				1/7	Salisbury	21	S. McGrath
1/8	Westport	39	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/9	Newbypt H.	7	B. Harris#
1/15	Turners Falls	23	H. Allen	2/3	Turners Falls	2	J. Smith
1/30	Mashpee	93	M. Keleher	2/6	Nantucket	20	K. Blackshaw#
1/31	Osterville	62	R. Stymeist#	2/18	Plymouth	40	G. Gove#
Wood Duck				2/18	W. Roxbury	12	P. Peterson
1/1	Worcester	12	K. Bourinot		Canvasback		
1/6	Clinton	17	N. Paulson	thr	Falmouth	3-7	M. Keleher#
2/17	Winchester	14	R. LaFontaine	1/3	Nantucket	79	G. d'Entremont#
2/18	Wayland	24	B. Harris	1/6	Cambr. (F.P)	1	J. Trimble
2/18	W. Roxbury	14	P. Peterson	1/15	Westport	8	R. Sawyer
2/23	Harwich Port	7	B. Nikula	2/14	Revere B.	4	M. Iliff
Gadwall				2/27	Nantucket	6	K. Blackshaw#
1/1	P.I.	20	T. Wetmore	Redhead			
1/30	Plymouth	16	M. Lynch#	thr	Falmouth	1-5	v.o.
1/30	W. Yarmouth	70	B. Nikula	1/3-7	Plymouth	1	M. Faherty + v.o.
2/23	Gloucester	22	S. Perkins#	1/5-6	Wachusett Res.	1	T. Pirro + v.o.
Eurasian Wigeon				1/8	Bourne	1 m	G. d'Entremont
thr	Falmouth	1 m	v.o.	1/8	Westport	4	BBC (R. Stymeist)
1/6	P.I.	1 imm m	B. Harris	2/13	Nantucket	5	K. Blackshaw#
1/8	Plymouth	2	S. Fenwick		Ring-necked Duck		
1/16	Orleans	2	J. Trimble	thr	Mashpee	225 max	M. Keleher
2/13-28	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw#	1/2	Barnstable	92	M. Keleher
American Wigeon				1/2	Nantucket	72	G. d'Entremont#
1/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	29	P. Champlin#	1/9	Worcester	77	S. Ricker
1/16	Orleans	70	B. Nikula	2/6	Waltham	44	J. Forbes
2/3-11	Turners Falls	4	J. Smith	2/18	Framingham	42	N. Paulson
2/19	P.I.	6	P. Sowizral		Greater Scaup		
2/26	Falmouth	70	J. Scott	1/2	Nantucket	700	G. d'Entremont#
2/27	Nantucket	45	K. Blackshaw#	1/5	Wachusett Res.	66	T. Pirro
American Black Duck				1/10	Falmouth	475	M. Keleher
1/7	W. Barnstable	325	M. Keleher	1/14	Nahant	88	L. Pivacek
1/8	Westport	380	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/15	Osterville	155	J. Trimble
1/8	Truro	500	SSBE (W. Petersen)	2/13	Westport	120	E. Nielsen
1/9	Boston H.	755	TASL (M. Hall)	2/13	Mattapoissett	2500+	M. Lynch#
2/5	P.I.	880	R. Heil		Lesser Scaup		
2/10	Ipswich	205	J. Berry	1/1	Marlboro	3	N. Paulson
2/20	Cumb. Farms	500	G. d'Entremont#	1/2	Nantucket	42	G. d'Entremont#
Mallard				1/15	Osterville	65	J. Trimble
1/6	P.I.	350	K. Elwell	2/19	Nahant	78	L. Pivacek
1/9	Boston H.	351	TASL (M. Hall)	2/26	Plymouth	6	R. Bowes
1/26	Salem	463	D. Ely	2/28	Mashpee	23	M. Keleher

King Eider				1/6	Wachusett Res.	1 m, 1 f	N. Paulson
1/5-30	Gloucester	1 m	P. Gilmore	1/8	Bourne	1 m	G. d'Entremont
2/17	Rockport	3	R. Heil	1/16	Mashpee	1	J. Trimble
Common Eider				1/25-2/20	Squantum	1 m	v.o.
1/1	Winthrop	600	M. Garvey	1/29	Lowell	2	S. Sullivan#
1/2	Nantucket	7000	G. d'Entremont#	2/5	E. Boston	1	M. Iliiff
1/9	Boston H.	3927	TASL (M. Hall)	2/26	Plymouth	1 m	V. Zollo#
1/20	E. Gloucester	300	R. Heil	Hooded Merganser			
2/5	P.I.	820	R. Heil	1/1	Medford	21	D. + I. Jewell
2/10	Ipswich	240	J. Berry	1/6	Wachusett Res.	16	N. Paulson
2/16	Duxbury B.	1550	R. Bowes	1/17, 2/19	Brookline	20, 26	P. Peterson
2/27	Chatham	6000	B. Nikula	2/3	Turners Falls	42	J. Smith
Harlequin Duck				2/18	Framingham	30	N. Paulson
thr	Rockport (A.P.)	101 max	v.o.	2/23	E. Falmouth	50	P. + F. Vale
1/3, 2/20	Manomet	13, 7	M. Faherty	Common Merganser			
1/23, 2/12	P'town H.	2, 5	B. Nikula	1/5	Agawam	12	S. Kellogg
2/thr	Sandwich	7	v.o.	1/9	Hadley	36	H. Allen
2/6	N. Scituate	17	SSBC (GdE)	2/3	Turners Falls	85	J. Smith
2/13	Westport	7	E. Nielsen	2/19	Brewster	50	P. Bono
2/27	Nantucket	12	K. Blackshaw#	2/22	Medford	20	M. Rines
Surf Scoter				2/24	Lee	20	R. Laubach
1/1	Winthrop	250	M. Garvey	2/26	Concord (NAC)	23	F. Bouchard
1/3	Nant. Sound	500	G. d'Entremont#	Red-breasted Merganser			
1/9	Boston H.	1057	TASL (M. Hall)	1/6	Cape Ann	79	J. Berry
1/30	Plymouth	304	M. Lynch#	1/8	P'town	1500	B. Nikula
2/5	P.I.	47	R. Heil	1/9	Boston H.	374	TASL (M. Hall)
2/17	Cape Ann	32	R. Heil	1/9	Waltham	2	J. Forbes
White-winged Scoter				2/6	Sandwich	120+	M. Lynch#
1/1	Winthrop	125	M. Garvey	2/19	Nahant	111	L. Pivacek
1/3	Nant. Sound	250	G. d'Entremont#	Ruddy Duck			
1/9	Boston H.	1277	TASL (M. Hall)	1/2	Nantucket	5	G. d'Entremont#
1/30	Plymouth	121	M. Lynch#	1/4	Jamaica Plain	4	M. Iliiff
2/5	P.I.	275	R. Heil	1/6	Lynn	2	R. Heil
2/18	Rockport	420	J. Berry	1/15	Westport	4	R. Sawyer
Black Scoter				1/25	Squantum	18	R. Schain#
1/3	Nant. Sound	1000	G. d'Entremont#	2/13	Orleans	18	V. Zollo#
1/5, 2/23	P.I.	240, 30	T. Wetmore	2/26	Wareham	2	V. Zollo#
1/9	Boston H.	172	TASL (M. Hall)	Ring-necked Pheasant			
1/13	Eastham (F.E.)	250	B. Nikula	1/1	Westboro	1	N. Paulson
2/3	Winthrop B.	20	P. Peterson	Ruffed Grouse			
2/18	Rockport	46	J. Berry	1/16	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#
2/27	Nahant	16	J. Malone	Wild Turkey			
Long-tailed Duck				1/2	Barnstable	23	M. Keleher
1/1	Winthrop	35	M. Garvey	1/2	Grafton	38	N. Paulson
1/1	Nantucket	212	J. Trimble#	1/23	Lincoln	25	S. Perkins#
1/2	Newbypt H.	50	R. Heil	1/23	Granville	49	S. Kellogg
1/3	Nant. Sound	500	G. d'Entremont#	1/30	Orange	25	SSBC (E. LeBlanc)
2/7	Rockport (A.P.)	15	P. + F. Vale	2/13	Eastham	52	V. Zollo
2/17	P.I.	182	D. Freiday	Red-throated Loon			
2/17	Cape Ann	49	R. Heil	1/1	P.I.	16	T. Wetmore
Bufflehead				1/9	Boston H.	13	TASL (M. Hall)
thr	Cape Ann	124 max	v.o.	1/30	Plymouth	3	M. Lynch#
1/2	Nantucket	275	G. d'Entremont#	2/5	Cape Ann	2	J. Berry#
1/9	Boston H.	1034	TASL (M. Hall)	2/6	Barnstable (S.N.)	2	M. Lynch#
1/14	Nahant	274	L. Pivacek	Pacific Loon			
1/15	Osterville	565	J. Trimble	1/8	P'town	1	SSBC (Peterson)
1/15	Falmouth	229	G. d'Entremont#	1/31, 2/18	Rockport	1	Gove + Gordon
2/17	P.I.	40	D. Freiday	2/17-18	Salisbury	1	D. Freiday# + v.o.
Common Goldeneye				Common Loon			
thr	Cape Ann	83 max	v.o.	thr	P.I.	32 max	v.o.
thr	P.I.	115 max	v.o.	1/1, 2/21	Ipswich	9, 22	J. Berry
1/2	Nantucket	200	G. d'Entremont#	1/1	Quabbin	6	L. Hoffman
1/6	Wachusett Res.	37	N. Paulson	1/6	Wachusett Res.	5	N. Paulson
1/9	Boston H.	254	TASL (M. Hall)	1/9	Boston H.	43	TASL (M. Hall)
1/30	Somerset	110	R. Stymeist	1/20	E. Gloucester	18	R. Heil
1/30	Plymouth	127	M. Lynch#	1/30	Plymouth	16	M. Lynch#
2/3	Turners Falls	130	J. Smith	Pied-billed Grebe			
2/27	Fairhaven	275	SSBC (GdE)	thr	Wayland	1	B. Harris
Barrow's Goldeneye				1/2	Nantucket	3	G. d'Entremont#
thr	Rockport	1 m	v.o.	1/8	Halifax	1	J. Sweeney
1/1-26	Winthrop	1 m	v.o.	1/13	Essex	1	S. McGrath
1/1-2/8	Wellfleet	1 m	v.o.	2/4-26	Plymouth	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
1/3-2/6	Waltham	2	v.o.	2/13	E. Falmouth	1	P. + F. Vale#

Horned Grebe				2/26	DWWS	3	R. Bowes
thr	Cape Ann	20 max	v.o.	Sharp-shinned Hawk			
thr	P.I.	31 max	v.o.	Reports of indiv. from 30 locations			
1/8	Westport	22	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/8	Westport	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)
1/8	S. Quabbin	1	H. Allen	2/6	Bourne	2	M. Lynch#
1/9	Boston H.	78	TASL (M. Hall)	Cooper's Hawk			
1/15, 2/13	Fairhaven	68, 60	M. Lynch#	thr	Reports of indiv. from 26 locations		
1/26	Marblehead	23	D. Ely	1/5	Medford	2	imm D. Bryan
Red-necked Grebe				1/9	E. Boston	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)
thr	Cape Ann	52 max	v.o.	1/17	Cumb. Farms	2	J. Sweeney
thr	P.I.	8 max	v.o.	1/27-30	Watertown	2	A. Gurka
1/4	Winthrop	11	P. Peterson	2/13	Westport	3	E. Nielsen
1/8	P'town	7	B. Nikula	Northern Goshawk			
Northern Fulmar				1/1	Quabbin	1	L. Therrien
1/13	Eastham (F.E.)	2	B. Nikula	1/10	Byfield	1	J. Sutherland
1/23, 2/12	P.I.	1, 1	T. Wetmore	Red-shouldered Hawk			
Northern Gannet				1/thr	Easton	pr	K. Ryan
1/1	Rockport (A.P.)	1	E. Nielsen#	1/thr	N. Attleboro	2	G. d'Entremont
1/2, 2/12	P.I.	1, 1	T. Wetmore	1/8	Westport	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)
2/17	Cape Ann	1	R. Heil	2/1-13	Easton	pr	K. Ryan
Double-crested Cormorant				2/10-23	Rehoboth	pr	K. Bartels
2/5	Arlington	1	M. Rines	2/18	Cumb. Farms	3	S. Arena
2/19	Boston	1	A. Drauglis	2/20	Dracut	2	A. Gaudet
2/26	Falmouth	1 ad	B. Zajda#	2/26	Plymouth	2	V. Zollo#
Great Cormorant				Rough-legged Hawk			
thr	Cape Ann	36 max	v.o.	thr	P.I.	4 max	v.o.
1/8	Westport	25	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/1	Ipswich	1	lt J. Berry
1/9	Medford	4	M. Rines	1/5	Southwick	1	J. Wojtanowski
1/15	Boston H.	25	S. Zende#	1/5	Saugus (Bear C.)	1	P. Peterson
1/16	Harwich	13	B. Nikula	1/13	Cheshire	1	J. Morris-Siegel
2/6	N. Scituate	74	SSBC (GdE)	1/15-2/28	DWWS	4 max	v.o.
2/16	Duxbury B.	14	R. Bowes	1/22	Rockport	1	dk D. Bates#
2/24	Newbypt	14 ad	J. Berry	2/thr	Cumb. Farms	8 max	v.o.
Great Blue Heron				2/22	Rockport (A.P.)	1	dk S. Perkins#
1/8	Arlington	4	A. Piccolo	American Kestrel			
1/15	Fairhaven	3	M. Lynch#	thr	P.I.	1	v.o.
1/23	Nantucket	3	K. Blackshaw#	1/1	Rockport	1	B. Larson
2/13	Mattapoisett	3	M. Lynch#	1/7	Winthrop B.	1	T. Bradford
Black-crowned Night-Heron				1/8	Westport	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)
1/1	Nantucket	1	G. d'Entremont	1/8	Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney
1/1	Medford	1	R. LaFontaine#	1/9-16	Hadley	1	S. Surner
1/16	Falmouth	3	M. Keleher	1/14, 2/18	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek
Black Vulture				1/16	Middleboro	1	R. Schain#
1/9	Sheffield	6	M. Lynch#	1/21	W. Springfield	1	S. Svec
1/25	Westport	2	S. Moss	2/8	Turners Falls	1	H. Allen
2/4	Kingston	1	D. Ludlow	Merlin			
2/11	Bourne	2	M. Keleher	thr	Reports of indiv. from 33 locations		
2/21	Randolph	1	S. Robert	1/1	Great Barrington	2	CBC
2/22	S. Egremont	2	J. Trimble#	1/2	P.I.	2	S. Sullivan#
2/27	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw	1/23	Cumb. Farms	2	G. Dysart
Turkey Vulture				Peregrine Falcon			
1/16	Nantucket	5	K. Blackshaw#	Thr	Reports of indiv. from 28 locations		
2/9	Bourne	15	M. Iliff	thr	Gloucester	2	v.o.
2/11	Ipswich	6	J. Berry	1/15	Boston	2	S. Zende#
2/12	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	7	P. Champlin#	1/29	Whately	2	I. Davies
2/13	Stoughton	6	N. Kerrigan	2/5	P.I.	2 ad	R. Heil
2/18	Woburn	5	J. Young	2/23	Newbypt	2	MAS (D. Larson)
2/20	Westport	13	G. d'Entremont#	Clapper Rail			
Osprey				1/25	Wellfleet	1	(Dead) A. Gorr
1/13	Lowell	1	S. Arena	2/23	Newbypt	1	S. Perkins#
Bald Eagle				Virginia Rail			
thr	Reports of 1-2 indiv. from 48 locations			1/1	Nantucket	11	J. Trimble#
thr	Newbypt	7 max	v.o.	1/7	Cotuit	2	M. Keleher
1/7	Statewide	107	MassWildlife	1/15	Barnstable	6	J. Trimble
1/7	Plymouth	3	MAS (J. Galluzzo)	1/18	Harwich	1	R. Schain#
2/19	S. Quabbin	5	M. Lynch#	American Coot			
Northern Harrier				thr	Nantucket	57 max	v.o.
thr	Reports of indiv. from 9 locations			1/1-25	Lynn	4-5	P. Brown
thr	P.I.	8 max	v.o.	1/1	Woburn (HP)	8	J. Thomas
1/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	3	P. Champlin#	1/3	Jamaica Plain	20	P. Peterson
1/7	W. Barnstable	2	M. Keleher	1/6	Eastham	52	E. Hoopes
2/13	Westport	2	E. Nielsen	2/6	Plymouth	10	SSBC (GdE)
2/18	Cumb. Farms	3	S. Arena				

Black-bellied Plover				2/13	Eastham (CGB)	20	V. Zollo
1/1	Nantucket	6	J. Trimble#	2/17	Truro	4	B. Zajda#
1/8	P.I.	2	S. Sullivan#	Bonaparte's Gull			
1/16, 2/18	Plymouth	2, 1	Schain, Gove	1/1	Nantucket	3200	J. Trimble#
1/16	P'town	2	J. Young	1/7	Rockport (A.P.)	2	R. Heil
1/19	Dennis	3	P. Flood	1/14	Nahant	240	L. Pivacek
Killdeer				Black-headed Gull			
1/5	Nantucket	3	T. Pastuszak	thr	Osterville	1	M. Keleher#
2/17	Fairhaven	4	G. Gove#	thr	Nantucket	1	v.o.
2/20	Cumb. Farms	6	J. Trimble#	2/5	Gloucester	1 ad	J. Berry#
2/28	Harwich	2	M. Keleher	Mew Gull			
American Oystercatcher				2/28	Lynn B.	1 ad	J. Quigley
1/4-2/13	Oak Bluffs	1	T. Day	Iceland Gull			
Spotted Sandpiper				thr	Gloucester	5 max	v.o.
1/9	Manchester	1	R. Buchsbaum#	1/1	Nantucket	82	J. Trimble#
Greater Yellowlegs				1/1	Turners Falls	2	H. Breder
2/27	Wellfleet H.	1	B. Nikula	1/8, 2/19	N. Truro	7, 20	B. Nikula
Ruddy Turnstone				1/8	P'town	7	B. Nikula
1/1, 2/5	Gloucester	20, 2	Larson, Berry	1/9	Lakeville	2	A. Morgan
1/1	Osterville	28	M. Keleher	1/29	P'town	5	B. Nikula
1/4, 2/23	Revere B.	6, 1	Peterson, Schain	2/20	Nantucket	15	K. Blackshaw#
1/8, 2/12	P'town	6	Petersen, Young	Lesser Black-backed Gull			
1/30	Nantucket	6	K. Blackshaw#	1/1	Nantucket	112	J. Trimble#
Red Knot				1/9	Westminster	1	T. Pirro
1/1	Nantucket	1	J. Trimble#	1/19	Waltham	1	N. Backstrom
Sanderling				2/1	Turners Falls	2	J. Smith
1/1	P.I.	100+	T. Wetmore	2/13	Westport	1 ad, 1 2W	E. Nielsen
1/1	Nantucket	308	J. Trimble#	2/27	Chatham	1 ad	B. Nikula
1/13	Gloucester	70	S. Hedman	Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull			
1/16	Harwich	110	J. Young	2/19	N. Truro	1 ad	B. Nikula
1/19	Dennis	250	P. Flood	Glaucous Gull			
2/5	Revere B.	54	R. Stymeist	thr	Gloucester	1-2	v.o.
2/13	Wollaston	14	J. Baur	1/8	P.I.	1	K. Elwell
2/18	Rockport	70	J. Berry	1/8	Westport	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)
2/18	Barnstable (S.N.)	400	M. Keleher	1/14	Easthampton	1	B. Bieda
Purple Sandpiper				1/20	Agawam	1	S. Kellogg
thr	Gloucester	62 max	v.o.	1/30	Orange	1	SSBC (E. LeBlanc)
1/7	Winthrop B.	30	T. Bradford	1/30	Revere	1	N. Backstrom
1/8	Westport	35	BBC (R. Stymeist)	2/13	Nantucket	1 ad	E. Ray#
1/20	Nahant	40	J. Malone	2/14	Turners Falls	1 2W	B. Zajda
1/22	Falmouth	21	B. Nikula	2/19	N. Truro	2 1W	B. Nikula
1/22	Rockport	185	P. + F. Vale	2/22	Westminster	1 1W	T. Pirro
1/30	Nantucket	50	K. Blackshaw#	2/26	Duxbury B.	1	V. Zollo#
Dunlin				Dovekie			
thr	P.I.	60 max	v.o.	1/8	P'town	2	SSBC (W. Petersen)
1/1	Amherst	1	T. Gagnon	1/29	Gloucester	1	D. Bates#
1/1	Duxbury B.	1400	R. Bowes	2/7	Rockport (A.P.)	3	F. Vale
1/22	Gloucester	75	P. + F. Vale	Common Murre			
1/26	Winthrop	49	R. Stymeist	1/7, 2/10	Rockport (A.P.)	2, 1	Heil, Vale
2/6	Marshfield	100	SSBC (GdE)	1/29	Gloucester (E.P.)	1, 2	J. McCoy#
2/12	Revere B.	52	P. Peterson	1/29, 2/12	P'town	2	B. Nikula
2/12	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	24	P. Champlin#	2/17	Truro	3	B. Zajda#
2/18	Barnstable (S.N.)	600	M. Keleher	Thick-billed Murre			
2/26	Plymouth	200	V. Zollo#	1/1, 2/6	Gloucester	1, 2	Nielsen, Grinley
Wilson's Snipe				1/16	P'town	2	J. Young
1/14	P.I.	1	C. Lipson#	1/20	Newbypt	1	S. Walch#
1/15	Boston (A.A.)	1	P. Peterson	2/5	Wellfleet H.	1	B. Nikula
1/23	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw#	2/6	P'town H.	1	B. Nikula
1/30	Burlington	1	C. Finger	2/14	P.I.	1	J. Galluzzo#
2/22	Plymouth	1	K. Doyon#	2/23	Rockport	1	W. Sweet
2/27	Fairhaven	1	SSBC (GdE)	Razorbill			
American Woodcock				thr	P.I.	400 max	v.o.
1/1	Nantucket	3	D. Bates	thr	Cape Ann	26 max	v.o.
2/21	N. Marshfield	1	C. Hannafin	1/1	Nantucket	680	J. Trimble#
2/26	Readville	1	S. Jaffe	1/5	Wellfleet	4100	M. Faherty
2/26	Mattapoisett	1	V. Zollo#	1/8	N. Truro	125	B. Nikula
2/26	Cumb. Farms	1	V. Zollo#	1/8	P'town	150	B. Nikula
2/28	Plymouth	1	K. Doyon	1/18	Eastham (CGB)	1000	R. Schain#
Black-legged Kittiwake				2/26	Manomet	3	V. Zollo#
1/7	Rockport (A.P.)	550 ad	R. Heil	Black Guillemot			
1/13	Eastham (F.E.)	65	B. Nikula	thr	Gloucester	22 max	v.o.
1/20	E. Gloucester	6	R. Heil	1/8	P'town	1	SSBC (W. Petersen)
2/5	P.I.	23+ ad	R. Heil	1/9	Nahant	3	TASL (M. Hall)

Black Guillemot (continued)				1/26	Salem	1	D. Ely
1/15	Boston H.	3	C. Schlotterbeck	2/6	Marshfield	3	SSBC (GdE)

PARAKEETS THROUGH FINCHES

Three Monk Parakeets continued to be seen along Breman Street in East Boston, and residents have placed feeders of suet and parrot food on the fence below the nest. For the first time in many years there were no reports of Snowy Owls in this January-February period. The general consensus was that the abundance of lemmings and rabbits in the far north has resulted in far fewer Snowies moving south looking for food. A **Red-headed Woodpecker**, always uncommon, was noted in Sterling, and it was another good period for Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, with reports from over twenty areas.

The heavy snow and unusually sustained cold weather this winter probably had its toll on many species that typically overwinter, so it was comforting to see reports of Eastern Phoebe, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Eastern Towhee, and two Ovenbirds that made it into February. More typical winter visitors were in good numbers, with over 25 reports of Northern Shrikes and an invasion of Bohemian Waxwings with close to 400 individuals noted in Windsor. White-winged Crossbills were reported from a wide area, with the largest groups noted on Cape Cod, but only two Red Crossbills were reported. Common Redpolls and Pine Siskins were also widespread, showing up at feeders everywhere.

Sparrows were well represented during the period. Sixteen species were reported, including two **Harris's Sparrows**, one on Duxbury Beach, another in Falmouth; **Lark Sparrows** on Nantucket and in Devens; and Nelson's and Seaside sparrows in the saltmarsh in Newburyport Harbor. Finally, a **Varied Thrush** visited a feeder in Centerville, and a **Western Tanager** was photographed in Peabody.

Robert H. Stymeist

Mourning Dove				1/28	Stoneham	1	D. + I. Jewell
1/2	Wachusett Res.	40+	M. Lynch#	2/21	IRWS	1	K. Doyon#
1/19	Ipswich	26	J. Berry	2/23	Rehoboth	2	K. Bartels
1/26	P.I.	22	T. Wetmore	2/26	Concord (NAC)	1	F. Bouchard
1/29	Salisbury	83	P. + F. Vale		Long-eared Owl		
1/30	Plymouth	57	M. Lynch#	1/8	DWWS	1	J. Galluzzo
2/21	Ipswich	38	J. Berry#	1/22	Ipswich	1 ph	S. Riley
2/27	Brookfield	14	M. Lynch#		Short-eared Owl		
Monk Parakeet				1/11	P.I.	1	M. Halsey
thr	E. Boston	3	v.o.	1/16	Cumb. Farms	4	R. Schain#
Barn Owl				1/23	Winthrop	1	M. Iliff#
1/1	Nantucket	3	J. Trimble#	1/28	Duxbury B.	1	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
Eastern Screech-Owl				2/6	Boston	1	V. Zollo
thr	Reports of indiv. from 21 locations			2/12	DWWS	2	MAS (J. Galluzzo)
1/29	Wayland	2	B. Harris	2/24	Nantucket	2	K. Blackshaw#
1/30	Ipswich	3	P. Brown	2/25	Revere B.	2	R. Schain#
1/30	Essex	4	P. Brown	2/27	Lynn	1	J. Trimble#
2/12	DWWS	2	MAS (J. Galluzzo)		Northern Saw-whet Owl		
Great Horned Owl				1/1	Plymouth	2	M. Faherty
1/1	Brewster	3	P. Trull	1/1	Douglas	2	I. Lynch
1/1	W. Bridgewater	2	D. Cabral	1/5, 2/19	Woburn (HP)	1	M. Rines#
1/1	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore#	1/9	Sharon	2	V. Zollo
1/16	Marstons Mills	2	J. Trimble#	1/12	Cambridge	1	M. Rosenstein
1/28	Wilmington	pr	J. Keeley#	1/18	Marstons Mills	1	R. Schain#
2/5	Mt.A.	2	R. Stymeist	1/23	Brewster	1	E. Hoopes
2/26	Cumb. Farms	3	V. Zollo#	2/16	Burlington	1	M. Rines
2/27	GMNWR	2	C. Corey	2/26	Lakeville	1	V. Zollo#
Barred Owl					Belted Kingfisher		
1/1	Douglas	1	I. Lynch	thr	Reports of indiv. from 14 locations		
1/1	Upton	1	N. Paulson	1/1	Quabbin	6	CBC
1/1	Rutland	1	T. Purcell	1/23	Sandwich	2	P. Brown
1/1	IRWS	1	W. Tatro#		Red-headed Woodpecker		
1/2	DFWS	1	N. Backstrom	1/22	Sterling	1	M. Lynch#
1/4	Marlboro	1	T. Spahr		Red-bellied Woodpecker		
1/11	Westminster	2	T. Pirro	1/1	Wayland	6	G. Long
1/22	Essex	1	D. Bates	1/15	Falmouth	4	G. d'Entremont#

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				1/15	Falmouth	10	G. d'Entremont#
thr	Reports of indiv. from 22 locations			2/27	Fairhaven	10	SSBC (GdE)
2/5	Mt.A.	2	F. Bouchard	Winter Wren			
Hairy Woodpecker				thr	Reports of indiv. from 10 locations		
1/22	Sterling	3	M. Lynch#	1/1	Quabbin	2	CBC
2/13	E. Falmouth	3	P. + F. Vale#	1/6	Sandwich	2	M. Keleher
Northern Flicker				2/6	Sandwich	2	M. Keleher
1/1	Douglas	3	R. Holden	Marsh Wren			
1/1	Worcester	3	K. Bourinot	1/1	Nantucket	12	J. Trimble#
1/16	Nantucket	3	K. Blackshaw#	1/2	Newbypt H.	7	R. Heil
1/17	Boston	3	P. Peterson	1/4	Ipswich	1	P. Brown
2/17	Fairhaven	4	G. Gove#	1/8	Lakeville	1	J. Sweeney
Pileated Woodpecker				1/14	GMNWR	2	N. Backstrom
1/17	Concord	2	C. Winstanley	2/6	Sandwich	1	M. Keleher
1/28	Manchester	2	D. + K. Young	Golden-crowned Kinglet			
1/30	Royalston	3	SSBC (E. LeBlanc)	1/2	Barnstable	6	M. Keleher
2/22	S. Egremont	2	J. Trimble#	1/10	Cambr. (F.P.)	4	J. Trimble
2/22	October Mt.	2	J. Trimble#	1/16	Ware R. IBA	9	M. Lynch#
Eastern Phoebe				1/28	Middleboro	7	M. Sylvia
1/28	Middleboro	2	M. Sylvia	2/5	Chatham	6	J. Trimble
2/1	Lincoln	1	B. McHugh	Ruby-crowned Kinglet			
Northern Shrike				1/1	Nantucket	1	G. d'Entremont#
thr	Reports of indiv. from 21 locations			1/1-2/7	Lexington	1	C. Floyd#
1/1	Quabbin	2	CBC	1/10	Jamaica Plain	1	M. Barber
1/1	Westboro	2	N. Paulson	1/15	Wenham	1	B. Hobbie
2/17	P.I.	2	D. Freiday	2/27	Fairhaven	1	SSBC (GdE)
American Crow				Eastern Bluebird			
1/10	W. Roxbury	1000+	P. Peterson	1/4	DFWS	15	D. Swain
2/20	Worcester	300+	M. Lynch#	1/8	Westport	10	BBC (R. Stymeist)
Fish Crow				1/16	Hamilton	12	R. Heil
1/8	Bourne	60	SSBC (W. Petersen)	1/16	Ipswich	14	R. Heil
1/8	Sagamore	50+	SSBC (Petersen)	2/7	GMNWR	12	K. Dia
1/9	Mattapan	12	BBC (R. Stymeist)	2/12	Harwich	18	A. Curtis
1/11	Lawrence	6	P. Brown	2/22	Sheffield	23	J. Trimble#
1/11	Mashpee	40	M. Keleher	Hermit Thrush			
1/23, 2/12	Waltham	1, 5	J. Forbes#	thr	Reports of indiv. from 13 locations		
1/30	Somerset	2	R. Stymeist	1/8	Westport	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)
2/23	Pittsfield	3	J. Trimble#	1/15	Falmouth	4	G. d'Entremont#
2/23	Bourne	24	P. + F. Vale	1/30	S. Dartmouth	3	R. Stymeist
Common Raven				2/5	P.I.	2	W. Tatro#
thr	Reports of 1-3 indiv. from 23 locations			2/5	Chatham	2	J. Trimble
1/30	Athol	6	SSBC (E. LeBlanc)	2/20	Westport	2	G. d'Entremont#
Horned Lark				American Robin			
thr	P.I.	28 max	v.o.	1/1	Westboro	2500+	N. Paulson
1/9	Sharon	59	G. d'Entremont	1/22	Plymouth	325	J. Trimble#
1/15	Scituate	42	J. Galluzzo	1/22	Rockport	185	P. + F. Vale
1/16	Montague	150	H. Allen	1/23	Deerfield	353	S. Surner
1/16	Deerfield	95	S. Surner	2/3	Turners Falls	300	J. Smith
1/16	Essex	47	R. Heil	Varied Thrush			
1/20	Newbury	150	P. + F. Vale	2/5-23	Centerville	1 ph	D. Graf#
1/29	Hadley	281	I. Davies	Gray Catbird			
2/1	Gill	130	J. Smith	1/1	Nantucket	6	J. Trimble#
2/18	Cumb. Farms	40	S. Arena	1/2	Barnstable	3	M. Keleher
2/27	Fairhaven	57	SSBC (GdE)	1/2	P.I.	2	N. Landry
Red-breasted Nuthatch				1/8	Westport	4	BBC (R. Stymeist)
1/1	Nantucket	11	J. Trimble#	1/15	Falmouth	3	G. d'Entremont#
1/10	P.I.	8	T. Wetmore	1/30	S. Dartmouth	4	R. Stymeist
1/23	Nantucket	8	K. Blackshaw#	2/5	Chatham	9	J. Trimble
2/6	N. Marshfield	4	SSBC (GdE)	Brown Thrasher			
2/10	E. Gloucester	3	P. Peterson	1/thr	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
2/20	Nantucket	12	K. Blackshaw#	1/8	Westport	1	BBC (R. Stymeist)
2/27	Boston (A.A.)	4	P. Peterson	1/29	Lexington	1	J. Forbes
Brown Creeper				2/5	Chatham	1	J. Trimble
1/4	Burlington	2	M. Rines	American Pipit			
1/7	Cotuit	3	M. Keleher	1/1	E. Boston (B.I.)	2	P. Peterson.
1/17	Concord	4	C. Winstanley	1/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	6	P. Champlin#
2/14	Westport	2	P. Champlin	1/12	Osterville	3	A. Curtis#
2/27	Groveland	2	K. Elwell	1/16	Hadley	22	L. Hoffman
Carolina Wren				1/20	Fairhaven	8	C. Longworth
1/1	Nantucket	30	G. d'Entremont#	1/29	Newbypt	2	J. Trimble
1/1	Ipswich	7	J. Berry	2/12	P'town	3	J. Young
1/6	Rockport	8	P. + F. Vale	Bohemian Waxwing			
1/8	Westport	19	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/9, 11	Gill	1, 4	Watkewich, Smith

Bohemian Waxwing (continued)				1/9	Wrentham	41	E. LoPresti
1/11	IRWS	3	A. Walsh	1/29	Cumb. Farms	75	G. d'Entremont
1/13-17	P.I.	1-4	v.o.	2/21	Ipswich	25	J. Berry#
1/16	Plympton	1	W. Petersen	Chipping Sparrow			
1/21	Cheshire	9	L. Roberson	1/thr	Milbury	1	A. Marble
1/22	Plymouth	5	J. Trimble#	2/5	Manomet	1	K. Doyon
1/23	Deerfield	2	S. Surner	2/12	Westboro	1	S. Arena
2/5	Westwood	2	S. Arena	2/21	Marlboro	1	C. LeBlanc
2/5	Shelburne	6	G. Platz	Field Sparrow			
2/12-26	Windsor	370 max	v.o.	1/15	WBWS	7	R. Schain
2/13	Dalton	200	G. Hurley	1/15	Truro	43	J. Young
2/14	Greylock	50	R. Laubach	1/15	Bourne	8	G. d'Entremont#
2/15	Turners Falls	1	M. Iliff	2/12	Harwich	2	A. Curtis
2/21	Heath	69 ph	S. Draxler	2/12	Belchertown	1	S. Surner
2/23	Worcester	7	M. Lynch#	Vesper Sparrow			
2/23	October Mt.	8	J. Trimble#	1/8	Cumb. Farms	2 ph	J. Sweeney
2/23	Williamsburg	25	D. Jones	1/8	Halifax	1	J. Sweeney
2/24	Ashfield	25	B. Lafley	Lark Sparrow			
2/25	Becket	50	R. Laubach	1/2	Nantucket	1	J. Trimble#
2/26	Sheffield	8	M. + K. Conway	1/26-29	Devens	1	K. Bourinot + v.o.
Cedar Waxwing				Savannah Sparrow			
1/1	Nantucket	195	J. Trimble#	1/1	Nantucket	36	J. Trimble#
1/11	IRWS	60	J. Berry	1/1	Pepperell	3	M. Resch
1/16	P.I.	62	P. + F. Vale	1/6	Southwick	3	S. Kellogg
1/17	Wayland	87	B. Harris	1/8	Westport	18	BBC (R. Stymeist)
2/5	Westwood	60+	S. Arena	1/8	Sheffield	7	J. Drucker
2/12	Amherst	135	S. Surner	1/17	Cumb. Farms	8	J. Sweeney
2/12	Turners Falls	200	S. Svec	1/29	Hadley	3	I. Davies
2/13	S. Quabbin	67	L. Therrien	1/30	S. Dartmouth	8	R. Stymeist
Orange-crowned Warbler				Ipswich Sparrow			
1/1	Nantucket	1	D. Bates	1/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	5	P. Champlin#
Yellow-rumped Warbler				1/5	Duxbury B.	3	R. Bowes
1/1	Nantucket	280	G. d'Entremont#	1/14, 2/18	Nahant	3, 2	L. Pivacek
1/8	Westport	17	BBC (R. Stymeist)	1/24	Gloucester	1	P. Brown
1/15	Falmouth	6	G. d'Entremont#	1/24	Salisbury	1	P. Brown
1/25	Squantum	5	R. Schain#	1/26	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore
2/12	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	5	P. Champlin#	Grasshopper Sparrow			
2/17	Cape Ann	1	R. Heil	1/2-5	Nantucket	1	J. Trimble + v.o.
Pine Warbler				Nelson's Sparrow			
1/2	Brewster	1	M. Keleher	1/2	Newbypt H.	2 ph	R. Heil
1/25-28	Easton	1	K. Ryan	1/16	Eastham (F.H.)	1	J. Trimble#
1/28	Middleboro	5	M. Sylvia	Saltmarsh Sparrow			
1/29	Harwich	3	E. Banks	2/23	Eastham	1	P. Trull
2/12	Brewster	2	P. Trull	Seaside Sparrow			
Palm Warbler				1/2	Newbypt H.	2 ph	R. Heil
1/2	Barnstable	1	M. Keleher	1/18	Eastham	1	R. Schain#
1/10	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszek	2/27	Fairhaven	1 ph	C. Longworth
Ovenbird				Fox Sparrow			
1/8	Hamilton	1	J. Frontiero	thr	Reports of indiv. from 11 locations		
1/29-2/3	Falmouth	1	M. White	2/20	Westport	3	A. Furman
Common Yellowthroat				Swamp Sparrow			
1/8	Lakeville	1	J. Sweeney	1/2	Newbypt H.	3	R. Heil
1/9	GMNWR	1	C. Johnson	1/11	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore
Yellow-breasted Chat				1/15	Fairhaven	3	M. Lynch#
1/1	Nantucket	1	J. Trimble#	1/17	Cumb. Farms	4	J. Sweeney
1/2	Gay Head	1	W. Manter	1/28	Middleboro	3	M. Sylvia
1/5-17	Fairhaven	1 ph	C. Longworth	2/5	Chatham	4	J. Trimble
1/15	Eastham	1	R. Longley	Harris's Sparrow			
1/15	Chatham	1	J. King	1/9-2/27	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes + v.o.
1/22-23	Gloucester (E.P.)	1	P. + F. Vale	2/1-26	Falmouth	1	H. Caswell#
2/6	Falmouth	2	J. Trimble	White-crowned Sparrow			
Eastern Towhee				1/1	Sandwich	1	M. Keleher
thr	Natick	1	G.+L.Long	1/1	Nantucket	2	D. Bates + v.o.
thr	Concord	1 m	S. Perkins#	1/3	Hadley	1	H. Allen
1/1	Nantucket	6	J. Trimble#	1/8	Sheffield	6	J. Drucker
1/15	Falmouth	2	G. d'Entremont#	1/16	Cumb. Farms	8	R. Schain#
1/30	S. Dartmouth	4	R. Stymeist	2/20	Westport	12	G. d'Entremont#
2/6	Falmouth	4	J. Trimble	Lapland Longspur			
2/6	Rockport (A.P.)	2	P. Peterson	thr	P.I.	6 max	v.o.
American Tree Sparrow				1/6	Dorchester	7	P. Peterson
1/1	P.I.	35	T. Wetmore	1/16	Worthington	4	E. Lewis
1/1	Pepperell	75	M. Resch	1/16	Newbury	23	R. Heil
1/2	E. Boston (B.I.)	30	P. Peterson	1/23	Deerfield	3	S. Surner

Lapland Longspur (continued)				2/18	Lenox	30	R. Laubach
2/5	Hadley	7	I. Davies	2/27	Wilmington	14	J. Keeley
2/12	Northampton	7	S. Svec	Baltimore Oriole			
Snow Bunting				1/18	Dennis	1	P. Kyle
thr	P.I.	43 max	v.o.	Purple Finch			
1/2	Winthrop	60	P. Peterson	1/1	Nantucket	6	J. Trimble#
1/2	Worcester	130	M. Lynch#	1/4	DFWS	1	D. Swain
1/16	Worthington	1000	E. Lewis	1/8	Essex	1	P. Brown
1/20	Hadley	60	K. Conway	1/16	Hadley	2	L. Hoffman
1/30	Orange	50	SSBC (E. LeBlanc)	2/5	Waltham	2	M. Rines
1/30	Orleans	200	C. Thompson	2/27	Groveland	13	K. Elwell
1/30	Williamsburg	80	C. Johnson	Red Crossbill			
2/20	Plymouth	50	M. Faherty	1/1	Quabbin	2	L. Therrien
2/24	Cumb. Farms	200	P. Peterson#	White-winged Crossbill			
Western Tanager				thr	Reports of 1-3 indiv. from 28 locations		
1/4	Peabody	1 ph	P. Brown#	1/3	Truro	4	M. Keleher
Painted Bunting				1/13	Wellfleet	5	A. Hight
1/15	Wellfleet	1	J. Young	1/14	Orleans	4	C. Thompson
Dickcissel				1/14-25	Truro	24	C. Skowron
thr	Nantucket	1 imm	T. Pastuszak	1/15	Rockport (H.P.)	5	L. Ferraresso#
1/8-15	Rockport (H.P.)	1	C. Dengler#	1/15	Chatham	22	J. King
Red-winged Blackbird				1/18	Marshfield	9	S. Sylvester
1/23	DWWS	45	J. Trimble#	1/27	Douglas	4	M. Landon
2/19	Salisbury	80	L. Ferraresso	1/30	Hinsdale	4	L. Roberson
2/19	Cumb. Farms	50	S. + J. Mirick	2/16	Annisquam	4	MAS (B. Gette)
2/19	Upton	40+	N. Paulson	2/20	Boxford	12	K. Disney
2/19	Bolton	35	P. Sowizral	Common Redpoll			
2/23	W. Roxbury	340	P. Peterson	thr	Reports of 1-50 indiv. from 66 locations		
Eastern Meadowlark				1/7	Ashfield	75	S. Sauter
1/1	Nantucket	6	J. Trimble#	1/9	Royalston	85	N. Barber
1/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	7	P. Champlin#	1/18	Duxbury B.	110	R. Bowes
1/3	Eastham	8	M. Keleher	1/31	Cambr. (F.P.)	55	J. Trimble
1/7	W. Barnstable	8	M. Keleher	2/18	Sheffield	65	S. McDonald
1/8	Essex	4	P. Brown	2/20	Windsor	78	M. Lynch#
Rusty Blackbird				2/22	October Mt.	85	J. Trimble#
thr	Reports of indiv. from 8 locations			2/28	Becket	60	R. Laubach
1/1	Longmeadow	3	G. Kingston	Hoary Redpoll			
1/1	Wayland	47	G. Long	1/10	Cambr. (F.P.)	1	J. Trimble
1/1	Sheffield	4	CBC	2/27	Yarmouthport	1 ph	P. Bono
1/7, 2/18	W. Barnstable	1, 5	M. Keleher	Pine Siskin			
1/9	Wrentham	3	E. LoPresti	1/5	Leverett	30	H. Allen
1/16	Hadley	2	N. Barber	1/8-2/14	Easton	40 max	K. Ryan
1/22	Stoughton	3	G. d'Entremont	1/22	Ware	20	M. Martint
2/7	W. Roxbury (MP)	2	M. Iliiff	1/28	Gill	45	J. Smith
2/14	Westport	9	P. Champlin	2/1	New Salem	20	B. Lafley
2/19-21	Weston	12	J. Diehl	2/17	Windsor	16	B. Spencer
Common Grackle				2/24	Royalston	12	P. + F. Vale
1/30	S. Dartmouth	52	R. Stymeist	2/27	Middleboro	24	H. Levesque
2/14	Lincoln	50	G. Loud	Evening Grosbeak			
2/17	GMNWR	30	S. Perkins#	1/1	Quabbin	1	CBC
2/18	W. Roxbury	80	P. Peterson	1/7	Leverett	3	H. Allen
2/18	Concord	28	S. Perkins#	1/22	Royalston	5+	M. Lynch#
2/19	Upton	25+	N. Paulson	2/1-21	Barre	12	P. Langley
2/23	W. Roxbury	100	P. Peterson	2/6	Boston H.	1	R. Schain#
Brown-headed Cowbird				2/12	New Salem	5	S. Surner
1/1	Upton	75	N. Paulson	2/17	Windsor	40	B. Spencer
1/8	Westport	380	BBC (R. Stymeist)	2/20	Royalston	51	S. Surner
1/9	Revere	340	P. Peterson	2/23	October Mt.	4	J. Trimble#
1/10	Brewster	22	P. Trull				



RED-BREADED MERGANSERS DISPLAYING BY SANDY SELESKY

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOU checklist, Seventh edition, up to the 51st Supplement, as published in *The Auk* 127 (3): 726-44 (2010) (see <<http://www.aou.org/checklist/north>>).

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

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO *BIRD OBSERVER*

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

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

ABOUT THE COVER

Eastern Phoebe

The Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) has benefited from European settlement. As its early folk names, “Barn Pewee” and “Bridge Phoebe,” indicate, the species made early use of man-made structures for nesting. This rather drab little flycatcher, gray-brown above and light below with smudges of gray on the breast edges, has a darker head and tail and a hint of yellow on its flanks. The sexes are similar in feather pattern, but juveniles may have a yellow wash below. The lack of wingbars, a black bill, and a characteristic bobbing of its tail distinguish it from the smaller *Empidonax* flycatchers and from the similar-sized Wood Pewee. The species is monotypic, with little geographic variation and no recognized subspecies. It is most closely related to the Say’s and Black phoebes of the West. Where the species overlap, there is no reported hybridization, and the species tend to live in different habitats.

Eastern Phoebes breed from northwestern Canada across to Newfoundland and south over most of the eastern half of the United States. Northern populations are migratory, wintering from Virginia through the Gulf Coast states and south to southern Mexico. In Massachusetts the Eastern Phoebe is a common and widespread breeder and common migrant. Its migration depends on the availability of insects, and thus on temperature. Phoebes follow the frost line north in the spring and south in the fall. Therefore they may begin to arrive early in March, and in the fall the peak migration is generally late September to early October, although some remain into November. A few attempt to overwinter.

Typically, the Eastern Phoebe is a monogamous species, producing two broods per year. It is a bird of the woodlands and edge habitat, usually near water, but habitat preference may be related to nest-site availability (e.g., bridges and culverts). The male’s song, from which the species gets its name, is either a *fee-bee* or *fee-b-b-bee*. Interestingly, in the nature vs. nurture debate, the Phoebe’s song is strictly “nature.” Young males and testosterone-injected females will develop the normal song in the absence of other singing birds, even if they have been deafened. There is little geographic variation in song. Males sing throughout the day until they find a mate and only in predawn thereafter, a practice suggesting that mate attraction is the primary function of their song. Both sexes produce a variety of chip notes. Territorial males chase intruders, with occasional fights resulting. Phoebes are quintessential “loners,” with little social contact throughout the year. Even mated pairs have little to do with each other beyond the biological necessities.

Nest building follows immediately after pair formation. Adult birds exhibit strong breeding-site fidelity, returning to the same nesting area year after year. Although John J. Audubon’s silver-thread-banded birds returned the following year, young phoebes rarely revisit their natal area. The female phoebe chooses the nest site, typically on a building, culvert, bridge, or rock outcrop with an overhang that offers some protection against the elements. The female builds a cup nest of mud, green moss, and leaves lined with fine grass or hair. Nests are either situated on top of a

surface or adhered to a more vertical one. Nests may be reused through the years and can become quite large. Phoebes may refurbish and use old Barn Swallow or American Robin nests. The female alone develops a brood patch and incubates the usual clutch of five white eggs for the 16 days until hatching. Unlike many species, the male phoebe does not feed the female, so she has to leave the nest to forage. The female alone broods the young during the 16 days until fledging. Both parents feed the chicks and feed the fledglings for several weeks until independence.

Eastern Phoebes forage mostly by hawking insects from a perch. They also pounce onto ground-dwelling invertebrates and glean insects from leaves while hovering. They will take almost any invertebrate prey but prefer Hymenoptera, butterflies, flies, beetles, and spiders.

Eastern Phoebes are often parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds, with up to a quarter of nests parasitized in some areas. Nest predators are also a problem. Breeding Bird Survey data, however, suggest an essentially stable overall population for the Eastern Phoebe, with regional and yearly ups and downs. The species' ability to utilize man-made structures for nesting and its double-brood production of young suggest a bright future for this delightful little flycatcher. 🐦

William E. Davis, Jr.



BIRD FEEDING BY DAVID CLAPP

About the Cover Artist: Julie Zickefoose

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

Julie's first book of illustrated essays, *Letters from Eden*, was published in 2006. Her next book, a memoir about birds, will come out when she finishes the paintings. In the meantime, you can visit her blog at <http://juliezickefoose.blogspot.com/>.

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

AT A GLANCE

April 2011



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

Unlike last issue's mystery bird picture, where all we saw was a disappearing rear end, this month we get to view the Full Monty. The pictured image unequivocally represents a Big Boy—an obviously large soaring raptor exhibiting broad wings and obviously long, spread outer primaries. Although the body and under-wings of the bird appear to be uniformly dark in the picture, caution is advised since strong back lighting can sometimes mask the contrast of light and dark areas. Accordingly, the identification of this bird should rely on a combination of features.

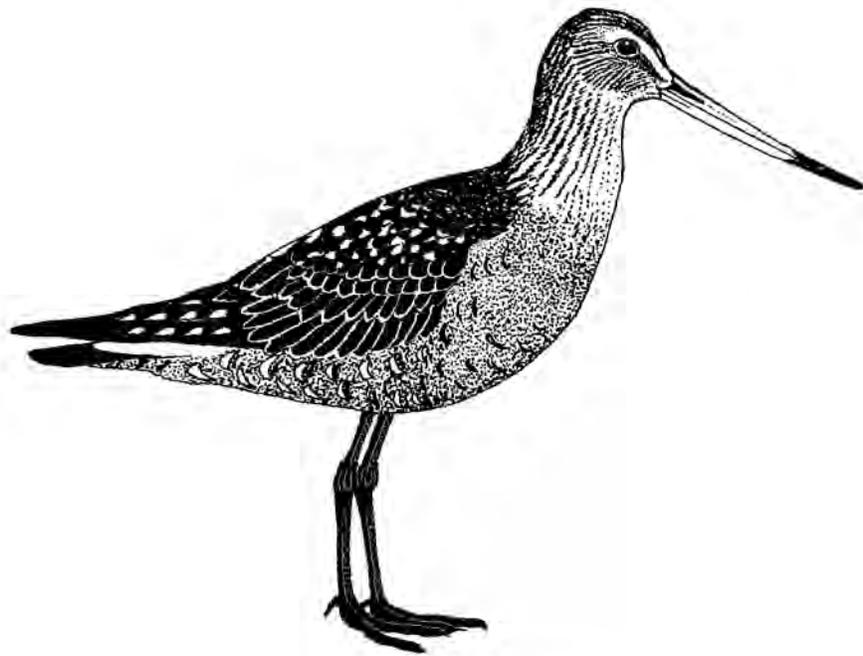
First, the breadth, length, and shape of the wings and tail, along with the conspicuously long outer flight feathers, all indicate that the bird is an eagle rather than a large hawk such as a Red-tail. A Turkey Vulture would have a much smaller head, a slimmer tail, and wings more obviously held upward in a dihedral configuration. Regardless of the lighting conditions, a vulture would also be likely to show at least the suggestion of a two-toned effect on the under-wings. Once we have removed Turkey Vulture and all the hawk species as identification possibilities, we are ready to determine which eagle species is represented—Bald Eagle or Golden Eagle.

At this point, identification is straightforward. A close look at the head of the mystery eagle indicates that the bill does not appear to be massive, and the back of the head and neck are clearly light-colored, while the face and underside of the neck are contrastingly dark. These are important features, especially since it also appears that there is no indication of light coloration or contrast anywhere else on the rest of the bird—body, under-wings, or tail—regardless of what the lighting conditions happen to be. As important as coloration, however, is the shape of the wings. They appear somewhat club-shaped, with a “pinched” appearance near the body and a bulge on the trailing edge near the mid-wing. This distinctive wing shape combined with obvious paleness on the nape and head and not the slightest suggestion of contrast on the

under-wings or tail indicate that the mystery bird is an adult Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). A sub-adult Bald Eagle would likely show at least a suggestion of pale mottling on the under-wings and body, as well as some contrast in the coloration of the tail. Also, the head and bill of a Bald Eagle would appear noticeably more massive than those of the pictured eagle, and the head coloration would be less uniform on the nape and neck. Lastly, the wings of a Bald Eagle would not appear club-shaped but more nearly straight-edged and not pinched at the base as in the pictured eagle.

Golden Eagles are relatively rare migrants and winter visitors in Massachusetts. The best chances of encountering the species are in mid to late fall at inland hawkwatch sites or at Quabbin Reservoir during the winter. The author photographed this adult Golden Eagle in June 2010 in Nome, Alaska. 

Wayne R. Petersen



HUDSONIAN GODWIT BY GEORGE C. WEST

AT A GLANCE



DAVID LARSON

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

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