

Bird Observer

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HOT BIRDS



Three **Mew Gulls** which appeared in the state less than a week apart turned out to have come from two very different origins. A bird on Nantucket, found by Jeremiah Trimble, was identified the Kamchatka subspecies. Suzanne Sullivan spotted one in Lynn which appeared to be the European subspecies, later noticed to have been banded, and confirmed to have been seen last year in the same area, and originally banded in Iceland! After that, a second, unbanded Mew was found in the Lynn area, and identified as another Kamchatka, with some discussion suggesting that it was an individual which had been seen in the area in previous winters for possibly over a decade. Sean Williams took the photo on the left.

Scattered reports of **Pacific Loon** have been coming in all winter, but the most cooperative have been at Race Point. Starting with a December 24 sighting by Peter Flood, up to three individuals have been photographed on several occasions since. One or more have also been reported intermittently from Rockport and Salisbury in late January and February. Steve Arena took the photograph on the right.



Glenn d'Entremont found a **Pink-footed Goose** in the Bristol Aggie athletic fields on January 28. It was seen in that area through February 1; what may have been the same individual was spotted in nearby Swansea by Liam Waters on February 21. Jonathan Eckerson took the photo on the left.

One of the most long-staying vagrant birds of the winter, a **Townsend's Solitaire**, originally detected on November 12 at Demarest Lloyd State Park by Glenn d'Entremont, continued to be seen and photographed there through February 13. Jeff Offerman took the photo on the right.



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Cover: Brown Creeper by John Sill © Massachusetts Audubon Society. Courtesy of the Museum of American Bird Art.



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Birding Miantonomi Memorial Park, Newport, Rhode Island

Wayne R. Munns, Jr.

Rhode Island, that tiny state often confused with Massachusetts or New York by people outside of New England, has two well-known spring migration traps: Swan Point Cemetery in Providence (the mecca for spring migration advocates in Rhode Island), and Miantonomi Memorial Park in Newport. Miantonomi is much smaller—about 30 acres compared to Swan Point’s 200 acres—yet it attracts a diversity of migrants and rarities on rival with or even surpassing Swan Point. Local birders proudly proclaim Miantonomi, or just “Mia” as we call it fondly, the “Swan Point of the South.” And we do so with good reason.



Readily accessible to the public, Miantonomi is a neighborhood park in southern Rhode Island, located on Aquidneck Island in Narragansett Bay. Bordered by Hillside Avenue to the east, Admiral Kalbfus Road to the south, Girard Avenue to the west, and Sunset Boulevard to the north, the park is easy to bird due to its convenient access, small size, and its pathways that traverse almost the entire park. One can cover all of Mia and bird well in two hours or less. But if bird activity is high, plan for three to four hours of intensive and exciting spring migration birding.

Miantonomi has a long history. The park was originally called Tonomy Hill or Wanomitonomo Hill because of its most prominent feature—its wooded hill, the highest point in Newport County. Sachem (Chief) Miantonomi of the Narragansett people, for whom the park is named, ceded the hill to English colonists in 1637. The colonists used the hilltop as a lookout against foreign forces that might have eyes toward the New World.

In 1913, the famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. suggested that the city of Newport turn the area into a park, and on Armistice Day in 1923, the hill and surroundings were established as a war memorial and city park. Six years later, in 1929, a fieldstone tower approximately 80 feet tall was built atop Miantonomi Hill as a World War I memorial and to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the 1778 Battle of Rhode Island. (For history buffs, this is also known as the Battle of Quaker Hill or the Battle of Newport.) At Newport’s highest point, the tower overlooks all of Newport and points beyond. Miantonomi Memorial Park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1968. The Aquidneck Land Trust established a conservation easement on the site in 2005.

Originally Mia was designed as a city park with plantings of exotic tree species and comfortable park benches. Today the vegetation is an eclectic mix of older ornamental plantings and native trees. Oak, birch, pine, beech, and maple, along with various non-native species, provide a combination of trees similar to old New England cemeteries, yet with a big difference. Neither the original landscaping plan nor the

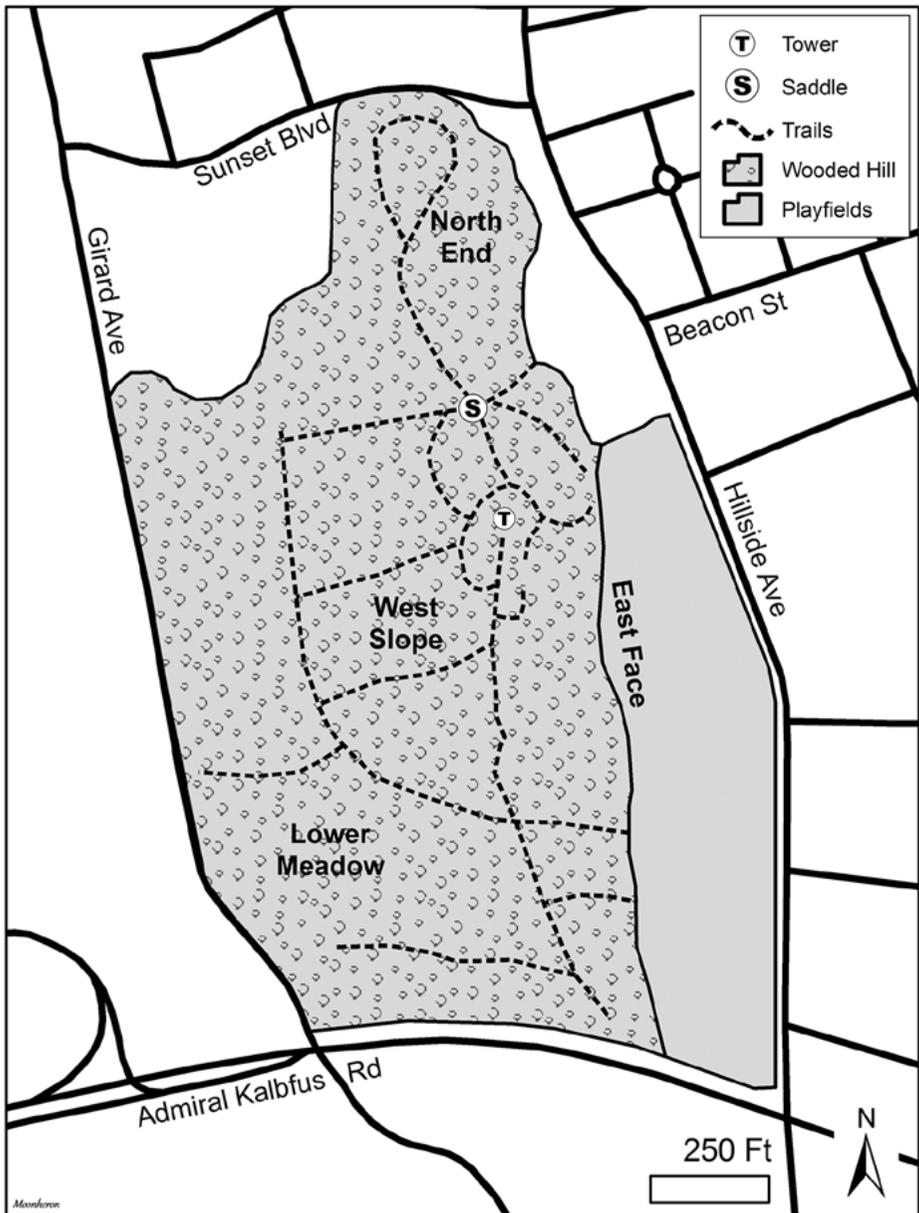


Figure 1. Map of Miantonomi Memorial Park.



Yellow-throated Warbler. All photographs by Carlos Pedro.

health of the ornamentals have been maintained, leaving the park with a bit of a worn-down feeling. Old concrete park benches, crumbling with time, dot the landscape. Nevertheless, in the eyes of migrating birds, Miantonomi is a safe haven for spending a day or two on their journey northward.

Miantonomi also boasts interesting geology. The hill has unusual outcrops of puddingstone, a sedimentary conglomerate consisting of distinctly rounded stones and pebbles embedded in a finer-grained matrix. And it rises steeply to a height of 150 feet above the surrounding coastal plain, which is unusual for Aquidneck Island and anywhere else in southern Rhode Island. Maybe this is why Mia is such a spring migrant magnet.

The City of Newport began to upgrade portions of the park in 2017, creating new pathways that accommodate access by people with locomotor disabilities. It is reported that a meadow close to Girard Avenue on the west side of the park will be restored in 2018. Along with routine maintenance of the primary pathways, these efforts should enhance the value of Mia for birding and other uses. Miantonomi Memorial Park is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There is no entrance fee. All areas are easily accessible, but expect some steep uphill climbs.

Years ago, Mia had a deserved reputation for being an uncomfortable, and perhaps even dangerous, place to visit. Although the temporary tents of people lacking permanent homes can still be found in the deeper recesses of the park, local officials have done a great job of ensuring that the park is safe to visit. I feel completely comfortable visiting the park and try to do so nearly every morning during spring migration.

Birds (and Other Animals) of Miantonomi

Although no one knows why Miantonomi is such a great migrant trap, its wooded hill seems like an obvious safe haven and feeding stopover for Neotropical migrants arriving in southern New England after their long oceanic journeys. Mia meets the conditions that typically induce spring migrant fallouts; a green beacon on a hill surrounded by residential development most certainly is a great attractor to birds as they struggle to make landfall.

Miantonomi Memorial Park has no official bird list. I have recorded 132 species over the course of a decade of birding there. The eBird hotspot list <<https://ebird.org/hotspot/L729779>> for Mia coincidentally includes 132 species. I don't contribute often to eBird, and there are some differences between the two lists, so I estimate about 135 species for the park. Although this number might seem meager by some standards, in the context of the park's small size and lack of habitat variation, that's a pretty good count. Plus, you can find most of those 135 species at Mia during any given spring.

My personal list includes 32 species of warblers, with annual or near-annual sightings of sought-after migrants such as Cape May Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Wilson's Warbler. Some of the more uncommon warblers in Rhode Island can also be found here in certain years, such as Cerulean Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, and Yellow-throated Warbler (the latter two now almost annual at Mia). Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler, Blackpoll, American Redstart, and Black-and-white Warbler are by far the most common.

In addition to the southern warblers, the park attracts other species not normally seen in Rhode Island, such as Summer Tanager (now annual) and Blue Grosbeak. I've also seen a Mississippi Kite soaring over the park. As the climate continues to warm in southern New England and elsewhere, I think it's safe to expect to see other southern species at Mia in the years to come.

Rounding out the list of interesting species that just pass through on their way to breeding grounds are Least, Yellow-breasted, and Olive-sided flycatchers, Blue-headed, Warbling, and Yellow-throated vireos, Lincoln's and Clay-colored sparrows, and Indigo Bunting. I've even observed a Bobolink singing in the trees at the height of migration. Some of these species breed elsewhere in Rhode Island, others are just plain off track. With more summer visits to the park, birders might discover that some of the Rhode Island breeding birds, e.g., Yellow-throated Vireo, might breed at Mia.

Common and Red-throated loons, Common and Red-breasted mergansers, and other ducks, gulls, waterbirds, and shorebirds often fly over Mia as they move elsewhere from nearby Narragansett Bay. Raptors, including Red-tailed Hawk, Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Cooper's Hawk, soar above the park.

Species known or suspected to breed in the park include Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House and Carolina wrens (the latter another southern species moving north), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher,



Summer Tanager.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore and Orchard orioles, Red-eyed Vireo, American Crow, Gray Catbird, and in some years Cooper’s Hawk. Yellow-billed and Black-billed cuckoos are observed often as well. Stay tuned for the results of the Rhode Island Atlas 2.0 <<https://www.ribirdatlas.com/>> that currently is underway and likely will change our understanding of nesting and wintering species in Miantonomi Park.

Other than humans, their dogs (usually leashed), eastern chipmunk, and the ubiquitous gray squirrel, Miantonomi has few large mammals. Virginia opossum, eastern cottontail rabbit, and an occasional raccoon round out its list of larger wildlife. Undoubtedly, the woods and fields host voles and mice, and various bats likely patrol for insects at night. I have encountered very few of these latter during my visits.

Birding Miantonomi

The birding at Mia is best in the spring: April, May, and early June. After the spring push, only a few species remain in the park to nest here. Summer through winter can be slow, with breeding species lingering into summer and woodpeckers like Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in fall and winter.

The park is divided into two main areas: a playground and a mowed, grassy, four-acre playfield on the eastern side, and the wooded hill to the west. Although isolated tall trees in the playground attract several species including warblers and vireos during migration, and Chipping Sparrows, American Goldfinches, and House Finches well into summer, this area usually deserves only a passing interest. However, Clay-colored Sparrows and Olive-sided Flycatchers have been seen in these trees on more than one occasion, so checking this area can be productive in spring. The open playfield usually



Prothonotary Warbler.

attracts flocks of European Starlings, and Ring-billed and Herring gulls after heavy rains.

The wooded hill is the feature that really attracts birds and birders alike. Unmarked but obvious pathways cut through the woods to allow access to almost all parts of the park. Local birders have given unofficial names to certain areas to help communicate more precisely the locations of good sightings. The Tower refers to the hilltop itself, with its prominent landmark used as a reference to all other locations. It is a somewhat open area with scattered ornamental trees that permits viewing of the upper third of the canopy of the forest below. This is a good place to look for flycatchers, warblers feeding in the ornamentals, almost anything in the surrounding canopy, and to scan the sky for raptors and passing waterbirds. Reach the Tower from the south using the main dirt road that begins near the disused restrooms at the south end of the playground, from the east by climbing the steep hill and old stone steps from an access point in the northwest corner of the playfield, from the west by two steep paths, and from the north by following the path leading south from the Saddle. (See **Figure 1**. Map of Miantonomi Park.)

Located just north of and below the Tower is the Saddle, so named because at its center the path rises to the north and south, and the intersecting path falls off to the east and west, thus emulating the curvature of a saddle. A couple of small depressions in this area can collect rainfall, which is attractive to migrants such as Mourning and Worm-eating warblers. This area is fully wooded with thick tangles of underbrush, and typically harbors the highest densities of migrants and residents alike. On fallout days, the cacophony of song here can be deafening, driving listeners like me back out into the

open playfield to clear our ears! Adding to the challenge for listeners are lots of Gray Catbirds, Common Grackles, and House (or as I call them, French Fry) Sparrows.

To the north of the Saddle is, well, the North End. The path from the Saddle ends in a loop, the interior of which contains a small pool of displeasingly green water and often trash. Nevertheless, birds seem attracted to the water, as well as the brush surrounding it. Under certain conditions—clear weather with southerly winds—many migrants appear to stage in the North End as if getting ready to leave that night. That, however, is conjecture.

To the west of the Tower is the West Slope, with its wide main path running north/south and other paths climbing east up to the Saddle and Tower. This is a deeply wooded area that can be good for warblers, wrens, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, and Scarlet and Summer tanagers. Other than American Robins, thrushes are not common at Miantonomi, but this wide path is one of the better places in the park to find (in descending order of abundance) Wood Thrush, Veery, Hermit Thrush, and rarely Swainson's Thrush out in the open. A good way to see thrushes here is to pause at the top or bottom of the straight main pathway and scan the open ground of the path. Sometimes, their singing gives them away before they are seen.

To the southwest of the West Slope is a linear open area called the Lower Meadow. You will see migrants and residents along its wooded edge, but the main reason for checking this area is to look for nesting Orchard Orioles, a southern species that is becoming increasingly common in Rhode Island.

The wide main path of the West Slope bends eastward at its southern end, ultimately intersecting with the main dirt road leading to the Tower. I use this path primarily as a conveyance between the wide main path of the West Slope and the Tower or playground.

Species along this path are similar to those found in the West Slope, and this area seems to be particularly attractive to Summer Tanagers.

Birding the East Face of the tree line along the eastern base of the hill, at the edge of the playfield, can be productive on sunny mornings as insects and their avian predators warm up. Birds can be low to the ground or high up in some of the larger oaks. I've seen Cape May Warbler here in scrub at about three feet off the ground and numbers of Black-throated Green Warbler equally low. You can reduce the strain of "warbler neck" from looking up at birds simply by taking a few steps back into the playfield to get a lower-angle view.

There is no well-established route to bird Mia; during spring migration the good birds can be anywhere. I usually begin by entering the woods on the pathway just east of the Tower, pausing at the Saddle to listen to where the action is, and then going from there. Otherwise, and unless my time is limited, I go up to the North End, walk along the West Slope, climb the hill to the Tower, and walk the East Face, all in just a little over an hour and a half. Of course, when things are really happening, I take time off from work to bird for three or four hours.

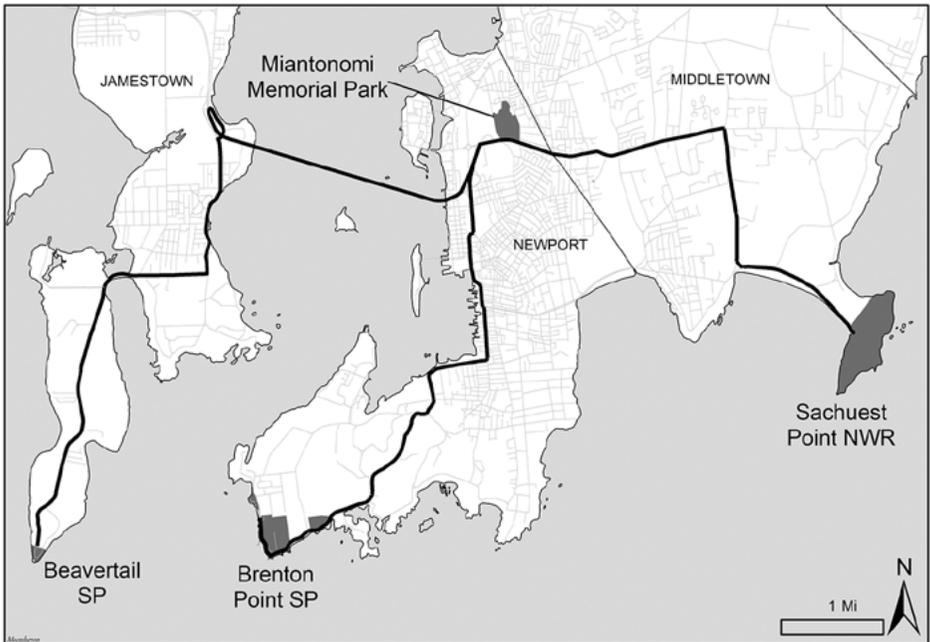


Figure 2. Birding Hot Spots in Southern Rhode Island.

Making a Day of It

Although spring migrants usually remain in Mia throughout the day, the birding slows noticeably after 10:00 am or so. Visitors who have traveled a distance might want to make a full day of their trip by birding other southern Rhode Island hot spots nearby. You can find seabirds, resident passerines, and spring and fall migrants at Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge and Brenton Point State Park, both located on the south end of Aquidneck Island, and Beavertail State Park at the south end of Jamestown. All of these places are within 10–20 minutes driving time of Miantonomi. (See **Figure 2.** Birding Hot Spots in Southern Rhode Island.)

The caveat during spring migration is that on a good birding day, you might end up spending your time at only one or two places, including Miantonomi Memorial Park. On a slow day, or during the other seasons, you might be able to hit all of these hot spots. Still, all are worth visiting if you journey this way.

Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge (Sachuest Point Road, Middletown, RI; 41°28'47.8"N, 71°14'37.0"W) is renowned as a migration stopover. Extensive coastal thickets provide a haven for birds coming north in spring and especially for birds preparing for their big flight in fall. Sachuest has been a reasonably reliable place to find Rhode Island rarities such as Yellow-breasted Chat and has hosted Western Kingbird and Bell's Vireo in the recent past. The refuge is particularly known for its wintering population of Harlequin Ducks (which has dwindled in recent years as the population shifts to Beavertail State Park), other sea ducks, Common and Red-throated

loons, and Horned and Red-necked grebes, all easily found offshore with a spotting scope. During irruption years, Snowy Owls can be seen roosting during daylight hours on Island Rocks just offshore. Northern Harriers, and at times Short-eared Owls, and occasionally Barn Owls, hunt the hillside fields below the refuge headquarters in the late afternoon and early evening, frequently providing spectacular interspecies interactions. Shorebirds, gulls and terns, and dabbling ducks can be observed in the coastal marsh that has recently been restored. American Bitterns sometimes lurk in the grasses of the marsh. See <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/sachuest_point> for more information.

Brenton Point State Park (437 Ocean Avenue, Newport, RI; 41°27'4.3"N 71°21'6.3"W) at the southernmost point of Ocean Drive in Newport offers an open rocky coastline facing the Atlantic Ocean, a reforestation area that once housed a horse stable, and large expanses of mowed grass lawn. Like Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, Brenton Point juts out into the Atlantic Ocean and is a first landfall for birds migrating north in spring. Shorebirds, including White-rumped Sandpiper, frequent the seaweed wracks and small sections of sandy beach during spring, summer, and fall, and gulls and terns can be seen fishing just offshore in summer. During fall migration, wooded areas and thickets can host numbers of warblers and vireos, and the park is gaining a reputation of being one of the better locations in southern Rhode Island for finding Connecticut Warbler and Philadelphia Vireo. Dickcissel is sometimes seen (more often heard) flying over the grassy lawns and thickets during fall. In fall and winter, Common Eider, all three scoters, and other waterfowl can be seen along the coastline, although they are not as plentiful as they are at Sachuest or Beavertail State Park. King Eider has been observed in recent years. Horned Lark and Snow Bunting flocks can be found on Brenton Point's lawns during late fall and winter. See <<http://riparks.com/Locations/LocationBrentonPoint.html>> for more information.

Beavertail State Park (734 Beavertail Road, Jamestown, RI; 41°26'58.4"N, 71°23'56.3"W) is another great place to see spring and fall migrants, and winter waterfowl. The "Beave" sports substantial coastal thicket habitat, harboring migrants and resident passerines. Connecticut Warbler and many other migrating passerines, including Dickcissel, have been logged here in recent years. Yet the Beave's rocky coastline is the main attraction. In fall, winter, and early spring, Harlequin Duck, Common Eider (rarely King Eider), Long-tailed Duck, and all three species of scoter can be observed (and heard) feeding just offshore of Beavertail's lighthouse. Common and Red-throated loons, Horned and Red-necked grebes, and Razorbills are usually present farther out (a scope is helpful). Little Gull also has been seen here. Winter storms with strong southerly winds can bring in other alcids, including Common and Thick-billed murrelets, Dovekie, and Black Guillemot, in addition to Northern Gannet, Bonaparte's Gull, and occasionally Black-legged Kittiwake. Tubenoses such as Northern Fulmar (winter) and various shearwaters (summer and early fall) can sometimes be found with the right weather conditions. Snow Bunting and American Pipit often use grassy areas near the lighthouse and parking lots. For additional information, see <<http://www.riparks.com/Locations/LocationBeavertail.html>>

Getting There

Located on Aquidneck Island in Narragansett Bay, Miantonomi Memorial Park (200–262 Hillside Avenue, Newport, RI; 41°30'37.0" 71°18'37.7"W) can be reached from northern New England and much of Massachusetts from southbound Interstate 95 (I–95) by taking Exit 9 to Route 4 south toward Narragansett just past Warwick. Route 4 becomes Route 1 about 9.6 miles later. About 10.3 miles from I–95, exit onto Route 138 east (toward Newport) to cross the Verrazano Bridge (toll free; watch for Peregrine Falcon hunting pigeons from the light posts), Jamestown (officially known as Conanicut Island), and the Pell Bridge (\$4 toll each way without EZPass) into Newport. Remain on Route 138 just after the Pell Bridge (do not take the exit for Newport) and follow it to the intersection with Admiral Kalbfus Road. At this point, the parking lot entrance for Newport Grand Casino will be directly opposite. Turn left (east) at the traffic signal. You will see the wooded hill of the park with its prominent tower on your left almost immediately. Go past Girard Avenue on your left, and proceed to the next traffic signal (approximately 0.25 mile) to the intersection of Admiral Kalbfus Road and Hillside Avenue. Turn left onto Hillside Avenue. The main entrance and best parking is located along Hillside Avenue next to the playground and playfield.

From western Rhode Island and Connecticut, head northbound on I–95 and take Exit 3A in Richmond right (east) onto Route 138 toward Kingston and the University of Rhode Island. In approximately 15 miles, turn left (north) onto US Route 1, and in two miles, exit back onto Route 138 east toward Newport. From this point, follow the directions given above to reach Miantonomi.

From eastern Rhode Island, southeastern Massachusetts, and Boston, take Route 24 from Interstate 195 (I–195) at Fall River, Massachusetts, and follow it south for about 9.6 miles from I–195 until it joins Route 114 in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Route 114 is also called West Main Road. In 16.7 miles from I–195, turn right (west) onto Admiral Kalbfus Road, and in 0.33 mile, turn right (north) onto Hillside Avenue. 🐦

Wayne R. Munns, Jr. lives in Jamestown, Rhode Island, and makes almost daily visits to Miantonomi Memorial Park during spring migration. Wayne has birded extensively, visiting about 30 countries and six continents. When not birding, Wayne is the director of the US Environmental Protection Agency research laboratory in Narragansett, Rhode Island.

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Grasshopper Sparrow Status and Conservation in Massachusetts and throughout New England

Andrew Vitz and Chris Buelow



Grasshopper Sparrow at Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area. Photograph by MassWildlife/Bill Byrne.

Grassland birds represent one of the fastest declining suites of birds in North America, and for many species, these declines are occurring throughout their range. The once abundant grasslands associated with the Great Plains and parts of the Midwest have undergone a large-scale transformation to agricultural fields and pasture, and historical disturbances associated with grassland habitat, e.g., fire, have been largely removed from the landscape. In addition to habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, pesticide use has been implicated in playing a leading role in widespread declines of grassland birds in the United States (Mineau and Whiteside 2013).

Although the dominant natural habitat in Massachusetts is forest, grasslands have historically been present, especially along the coastal plain and in river valleys where sandy soils have been deposited by glacial activity and flooding. Following the last glacial period 10,000 years ago, the retreating ice left behind a barren landscape initially colonized by wind dispersed grasses and forbs. This early post-glacial revegetation likely resulted in contiguous grassland from the Great Plains to the New England coast. Grassland birds would certainly have benefitted from this increase in habitat, and it is thought that they have persisted in the region in pockets of habitat with sandy soils and periodic natural or anthropogenic disturbance such as fire (Vickery and Dunwiddie 1997). Support for the concept of a long-term grassland presence in New England is found in the evolution of northeastern endemic grassland-dependent birds such as the eastern subspecies of the Henslow's Sparrow (*Ammodramus henslowii susurrans*) and the Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis savanna*).

Habitat for many grassland birds in New England, including Grasshopper Sparrows (*Ammodramus savannarum*), increased following European colonization during the late 18th and early 19th centuries when approximately 80% of Massachusetts' forests were cleared for agriculture. In *Birds of Massachusetts*



Grassland at Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area. Photograph by MassWildlife.

and other New England States, Edward Forbush referred to the species as “not so uncommon in Massachusetts as most people believe, but its insect-like song is barely audible at one hundred yards” (Forbush 1929). However, as farms in New England were abandoned, the land began to revert to forest resulting in declines of grassland birds. While this return to forest reflects a more natural state in the Northeast, it is important to remember that grassland habitats have been part of the Massachusetts landscape since the retreat of the Wisconsin Ice Sheet. In addition to forest regeneration, agricultural intensification in much of the remaining farmland has degraded the habitat for grassland birds, further contributing to their population declines.

As many native species associated with grassland habitat continue to decline, the regional viability of species such as the Grasshopper Sparrow has become tenuous. It is now generally recognized by conservation organizations, such as the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife), Mass Audubon, The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR), and The Nature Conservancy, that managing grassland habitat in Massachusetts is a conservation priority. Furthermore, given the ongoing decline of Grasshopper Sparrow in the core of its range in the Great Plains and Midwest, managing for this species in the Northeast has increased in importance. Breeding Bird Survey results indicate the Grasshopper Sparrow has undergone a range-wide 2.5% annual decline since 1966, with an even steeper annual decline (-3.3%) throughout the

New England and mid-Atlantic region (Sauer et al. 2017). As a result, the Grasshopper Sparrow is state-listed as either threatened or endangered in every New England state. Although the ephemeral nature of grasslands makes managing them a challenge, such management is necessary to maintain New England's full biodiversity.

The Grasshopper Sparrow is a small, migratory grassland bird with a relatively large breeding range extending from the western Great Plains to New England and a wintering range in the southern United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean. However the bird specializes in a habitat that is patchily distributed and rare throughout much of this range. Grasshopper Sparrows are considered to be area-sensitive and are generally only found nesting in suitable patches of habitat that are greater than 75 acres in size (Vickery 1996; MassWildlife unpublished data). In Massachusetts, nesting Grasshopper Sparrows are primarily found in grasslands dominated by warm-season bunch grasses. The species clutch size averages 4.3 eggs (range = 3–6), and it is capable of double brooding or producing two sets of young in a single breeding season (Vickery 1996). The female incubates eggs for 11–13 days and altricial young are fed in the nest for nine days before fledging. Upon leaving the nest, fledglings are flightless and for 3–4 weeks remain dependent on their parents before dispersing away from their natal territory (Vickery 1996). Although the Grasshopper Sparrow is subject to brood parasitism by the Brown-headed Cowbird, such parasitism levels are generally low and probably have little effect on the population.

Throughout New England, Grasshopper Sparrows are confined to a small number of sites, many of which are airports, landfills, and military installations. However, airport managers are increasingly compelled to reduce the amount of grassland habitat on their property as they seek to expand, maintain runway safety, and branch out into non-aeronautical uses. Similarly, at military sites, even though official policies recognize the need to take habitat needs into account, military uses take precedence over habitat concerns. Recently, efforts to encourage diversity in the energy sector have resulted in a push for solar panel installations in open habitats such as landfills and airfields, which adversely impacts grassland bird habitat at these sites.

Grasshopper Sparrows in Massachusetts

The Grasshopper Sparrow is listed as a threatened species under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA). Through MESA, nesting habitat for this species is provided a layer of protection, and MassWildlife actively manages land to provide nesting habitat for this and other sandplain grassland species. Over the last several decades, Grasshopper Sparrows have been documented during the breeding period at 44 sites in Massachusetts, but almost half of these had only one or two singing males and many no longer support nesting birds. Only a few sites had more than 10 pairs of Grasshopper Sparrows, and sites with fewer than 10 pairs are highly vulnerable and frequently become locally extinct (Jones 2000).

Suitable habitat can be created for Grasshopper Sparrows, but this process requires continued maintenance through prescribed burning, mowing, herbicide application, or low intensity grazing. Prescribed fire has been successfully implemented as a management tool in late summer and early fall or late winter and spring while avoiding



Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area from a drone. Photograph by MassWildlife.

habitat disturbance during the breeding season. Similarly, mowing during the breeding season has been documented to cause large scale nesting failure by grassland birds (Perlut et al. 2006), and a deferred mowing regime—after August 1—is recommended if managing for these species. One way to promote late-season mowing is to encourage the growth of native warm-season grasses (e.g., little blue stem, Indian grass), which mature later than the cool-season grasses, allowing for mowing to be delayed until after the peak nesting period.

In 2013, MassWildlife, in collaboration with conservation partners, developed “An Action Plan for the Conservation of State-listed Obligate Grassland Birds in Massachusetts” <<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/grassland-bird-conservation>>. Given concerns about the long-term viability of the Commonwealth’s Grasshopper Sparrow and Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*) populations, the primary purposes of this report were to identify the most important breeding sites for these species and to initiate a long-term action planning and implementation process for top-ranking sites in order to enable the best possible management on an ongoing basis. Specifically, we sought to identify, and focus additional resources on the expansion, restoration, and management of Grasshopper Sparrow and Upland Sandpiper habitat on protected open-space sites that are large enough to support viable populations in the long-term and where grassland habitat management is a primary goal.

Of the 43 sites that were identified by the plan to have supported breeding

Grasshopper Sparrows at some point since 1990, three sites, owned and managed by MassWildlife, were deemed to provide some of the best management and restoration opportunities in the state because of their positions in the landscape and the agency's commitment to managing these important resources. These sites were the Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Falmouth, Southwick WMA in Southwick, and Bolton Flats WMA in Lancaster.

Frances A. Crane WMA: The grassland at Frances A. Crane WMA in Falmouth has long supported breeding Grasshopper Sparrows, but by the year 2000 the number of Grasshopper Sparrow territories had dwindled, primarily due to encroaching woody vegetation and a shift away from warm-season grasses. In 2001, a management regime was introduced to the grassland that included prescribed fire, targeted mowing, and invasive species control in order to begin restoring the sandplain grassland community. By 2004, the Grasshopper Sparrow population rebounded to nine territories, where it remained for several years with active management. In 2014, and based upon recommendations of the Grassland Bird Plan, MassWildlife began one of its most ambitious landscape restoration efforts in its history, working to nearly double the size of this grassland, bringing it to roughly 350 contiguous acres. This work focused on converting approximately 150 acres of woodland surrounding the existing grassland to grassland, planting this converted area with native warm-season grasses, and developing a management plan that would result in a high-integrity sandplain grassland community to support Grasshopper Sparrow and a large suite of other highly specialized—and often quite rare—plants and animals. The impact of this work on the Grasshopper Sparrow was almost immediate, with the population jumping to 27 territories in 2016, which is remarkable considering this increase occurred before any of the former woodland areas even supported grass. This increase in territories occurred on the original grassland footprint and was a result of simply pushing the forest edge back, allowing the original patch to become interior grassland habitat. As with many grassland birds, Grasshopper Sparrows strongly avoid edge habitat. By 2017, the new restoration areas began providing grassland habitat, and as these areas continue to improve, the Frances A. Crane WMA is expected to support approximately 50 Grasshopper Sparrow territories and become one of the largest and most stable sandplain grassland sites in Massachusetts.

Concurrent with MassWildlife's work at Frances A. Crane WMA, resource managers at the adjacent Joint Base Cape Cod also have recently increased their grassland restoration and management efforts, resulting in a marked increase in their Grasshopper Sparrow population. With these two sites in such close proximity (~1km), and with the goals of both programs so well aligned, the two agencies have begun working together to share expertise and resources. In fact, color-banded Grasshopper Sparrows have been detected moving between sites within a season, indicating the birds may actually perceive them as a single large grassland site.

Southwick WMA: In 2008, MassWildlife purchased the former General Cigar Company property in Southwick. This approximately 250-acre parcel was predominately abandoned tobacco fields and was complemented by an additional 200 acres across the state line that was purchased at the same time by the Connecticut



Prescribed burn. Photograph by MassWildlife/Marianne Piche.

Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for the Suffield WMA. From the onset, these two properties were viewed as prime sites for grassland bird management due to their size, ability to support sandplain grassland community, and their proximity to two other important sandplain grassland sites: Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Massachusetts, and Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport in Westfield, Massachusetts. In fact, when purchased, both WMA properties supported small Grasshopper Sparrow populations, though the Southwick WMA population had disappeared by 2013 due to succession and the proliferation of invasive plant species. In 2015, and based upon the recommendations of the Grassland Bird Plan, MassWildlife initiated another ambitious grassland restoration effort aimed at maximizing the size and integrity of the sandplain grassland community at the Southwick WMA. This work focused on removing hedgerows, controlling invasive species, and restoring warm-season grasses across the site to create a contiguous, high quality grassland habitat of 250 acres, or about 400 acres when including the adjacent Suffield WMA. As with the Frances A. Crane WMA, the impact of the work at Southwick WMA was almost immediate. As the little bluestem became established in 2017, approximately 10 singing male Grasshopper Sparrows were documented on the site, along with strong numbers of Eastern Meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna*) and Savanna Sparrows (MassWildlife unpublished data). MassWildlife intends to introduce prescribed fire onto the site in 2018 and has just purchased an additional 80 acres adjacent to the existing grassland, some of which will be managed as grassland habitat.

Bolton Flats WMA: The core of the Pine Hills section of Bolton Flats WMA in Lancaster is a 130-acre former gravel mine that had traditionally supported a small population of Vesper Sparrows (*Pooecetes gramineus*), but had been succeeding to forest over the past decade. Based on this history, the size of the site, and its ability to support a sandplain grassland community, the Grassland Bird Plan identified the Pine Hills section of the WMA as the third opportunity for MassWildlife to actively manage for grassland birds on their properties. In 2014, the encroaching trees within the entire

footprint of the former gravel mine were mowed, and by the summer of 2015 not only had a robust sandplain grassland community reestablished itself from the rootstock and seed bank, but Grasshopper and Vesper Sparrows quickly increased in numbers. Prescribed fire will be introduced in 2018 along with occasional targeted mowing to continue to push this toward a grass-dominated system.

Although these three wildlife management areas demonstrate successful Grasshopper Sparrow conservation, the majority of these birds in Massachusetts are found on military bases and municipal airports. MassWildlife works with staff at these sites to promote Grasshopper Sparrows and implement mitigation measures when applicable. The largest population of Grasshopper Sparrows occurs at the Westover Air Reserve Base in the Connecticut River Valley. The site is characterized by approximately 1,300 acres of grassland on well-drained sandy soils, and the habitat is managed through a combination of mowing and prescribed burns. In recent years, as part of an effort to encourage little bluestem, a native warm-season grass, the base has increased the use of prescribed burning and has begun employing a spring application of an herbicide and plant growth regulator that suppresses cool-season grasses. Exotic cool-season grasses grow quickly in spring requiring multiple mowings to keep the grass height low for aircraft safety concerns. Not only do native warm-season grasses allow for delayed mowing, but these bunch grasses provide ideal habitat for Grasshopper Sparrows as they offer the vegetative structure and bare ground necessary for foraging and nesting. In fact, grassland habitat in the form of hayfields generally does not support Grasshopper Sparrows because the vegetation is too dense. Given its large size and favorable management, Westover has been documented as supporting over 200 singing male Grasshopper Sparrows in recent years, making it the most important site for this species in all of New England (MassWildlife unpublished data).

Other Massachusetts sites that support substantial populations of Grasshopper Sparrow include the Westfield-Barnes and Plymouth airports. As with Westover, aircraft safety is a primary importance, and MassWildlife has worked with both airports to conserve Grasshopper Sparrows at these sites. At each site, surveys for Grasshopper Sparrows are conducted every couple of years, and a management plan has been implemented that will allow for aircraft safety and sparrow conservation. Municipal airports, military bases, and capped landfills provide important Grasshopper Sparrow sites in Massachusetts, and MassWildlife will continue to work with these organizations to conserve Grasshopper Sparrow populations through regulations provided by the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act.

Grasshopper Sparrows in other New England States

Compared to Massachusetts, the Grasshopper Sparrow is even more rare throughout the rest of New England. The more heavily forested states of Maine and New Hampshire do not support many nesting Grasshopper Sparrows, but the birds do remain at some managed grasslands, air fields, and landfills. In New Hampshire, the state-wide population of Grasshopper Sparrow is approximately 40 pairs. There are only three sites with more than five pairs of nesting Grasshopper Sparrows, and these are the Portsmouth International Airport at Pease, Concord Municipal Airport, and



Grasshopper Sparrow at Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area. Photograph by MassWildlife/Bill Byrne.

the Dillant-Hopkins Airport in Keene (P. Hunt, personal communication). Similarly, Maine has no more than five sites supporting nesting Grasshopper Sparrows, and these are all in the southeastern portion of the state. The 600-acre Kennebunk Plains complex in Kennebunk and the California Fields Wildlife Area in Hollis support most of the nesting Grasshopper Sparrows in Maine.

In Vermont there are a limited number of sites in the agricultural area along Lake Champlain, and, according to eBird, during 2015–2017 the only multi-pair sites were the National Guard Camp Johnson in Colchester and the Franklin County State Airport in Swanton. Three other sites in Vermont had single observations of Grasshopper Sparrows. Rhode Island has only a single site—the Frances Carter Preserve in Charlestown—where Grasshopper Sparrows are reliable nesters. There are more nesting sites in

Connecticut, with most of them being clustered within the Connecticut River valley. In addition to the Suffield WMA, multiple pairs of Grasshopper Sparrows are found at the Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, the Hartford Landfill, Rentschler Field in East Hartford, and Robertson Field in Plainville.

Because Grasshopper Sparrows require large patches of suitable habitat for nesting, conservation efforts targeting this species should benefit other grassland birds as well as species of concern in other taxonomic groups such as reptiles, invertebrates, and plants. For instance, the Frances A. Crane and Southwick WMAs and Westover Air Reserve Base all support nesting meadowlarks, with Westover hosting the most meadowlarks of any single site in Massachusetts. Other grasslands in Massachusetts that support important populations of nonlisted grassland birds include the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, the Common Pasture in Newburyport and Newbury, Woodsom Farm in Amesbury, and Mass Audubon's Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary in Marshfield.

Conclusions

The Grasshopper Sparrow is state-listed as a threatened or endangered species throughout New England and is part of the region's natural heritage. The species is in urgent need of conservation, and its long-term persistence in the region is now largely dependent on anthropogenic management. Given that, it is up to conservation

organizations to monitor and manage for this species to ensure its continued existence in New England. In Massachusetts, the state wildlife agency has partnered with other conservation-oriented organizations to promote Grasshopper Sparrow and other grassland bird populations, and the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act provides a layer of habitat protection in areas with nesting Grasshopper Sparrows. Together these actions lay the groundwork to maintain sustainable populations of Grasshopper Sparrows and ultimately the entire suite of grassland birds in Massachusetts. 🦋

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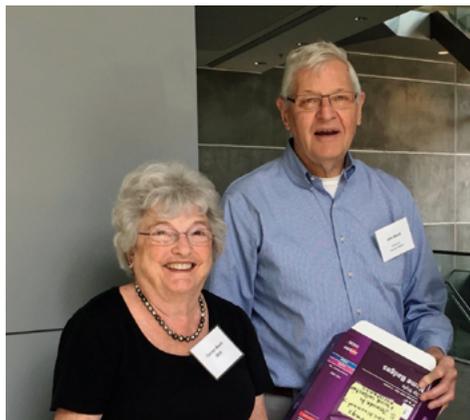
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Andrew Vitz is the state ornithologist for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. He spent the summer of 1998 collecting data on the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow (subspecies) nesting success and population status. The principal investigator of the project was Dr. Peter Vickery of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and on this project Andrew met his wife, Marja Bakermans. The Florida Grasshopper Sparrow is currently on the brink of extinction, and is now being captive reared by biologists trying to save the bird from the same fate as the Dusky Seaside Sparrow whose last known individual expired in captivity on June 17, 1987.

Chris Buelow is the restoration ecologist for the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program where he has focused on the restoration and management of rare species habitat and important natural communities across the Commonwealth for the past 15 years. Over this time, the relationship between sandplain grassland and the specialized species that these communities support—including Grasshopper Sparrow—has been a major aspect of his work. Chris is lifelong resident of Hardwick, Massachusetts, where he lives with his wife Jenna and daughter Vladia.

A Thankful Salute to a Dynamic Duo: Carolyn and John Marsh

Wayne R. Petersen



Carolyn and John Marsh. Photograph by Julia Yoshida.

Bird Observer has enjoyed a long and fruitful existence—an existence initiated with the journal’s seminal publication in 1973. Throughout the 45 years of this venerable run, a sometimes little-known fact is that *no one* on the staff has ever received financial compensation for the thousands of hours of volunteer time that have made the publication of the journal possible. In an age of rising publication costs and skilled and talented workers often unwilling to give up huge chunks of time without compensation, *Bird Observer*, with a robust and enduring circulation of many hundreds of subscribers, is practically unique in its quality as a

birding journal. So it should not come as a surprise that behind the scenes there have been dozens of committed volunteers involved in producing the journal through the years, but very few that can top the efforts of Carolyn and John Marsh.

This self-described neophyte birding team first showed up on the *Bird Observer* radar screen in the mid-1980s following a recommendation by the late Miriam Dickey—a beloved Mass Audubon teacher who for many years served as a mentor to new birders and aspiring ornithologists—that Carolyn should subscribe to *Bird Observer*, which she enthusiastically did in 1986. This happened to be at a time when the journal was periodically offering birding workshops for folks who had a burgeoning interest in birds. Today, Carolyn claims that her connection to *Bird Observer* journal and these birding workshops were major enhancers of her birding education.

But this was only the beginning. In 1997, Carolyn took on the role of Subscription Manager of the journal, a position she held until 2003, and late in 1997 she was also elected to the Board of Directors, a position she actively held until 2016. As a result of Carolyn’s enthusiasm for the journal, vision for its content, and her proven skill at managing both authors and copy, in 2004 she earned the distinction of becoming Managing Editor. During the two years of Carolyn’s editorship, she oversaw the publication of such timely or original articles as “The First Annual Superbowl of Birding,” “Good News for Massachusetts Birds: Introducing Massachusetts eBird www.massaudubon.org/ebird,” and “The Digital Camera as an Identification Tool.” On her watch, the first and only insect appeared as an *At A Glance* mystery feature; as well as the first and only color cover for the print journal to celebrate the 2004 occurrence

of a Red-footed Falcon on Martha's Vineyard. She also maintained the tradition of the journal by featuring such important articles as "A Springtime Exploration of Essex County's Coastal Islands with Notes on Their Historic Use by Colonially Nesting Birds," "First Nest Record of Common Raven in Essex County," "The 'Wellesley Boys'—Contributions to Continental Birding," and "Bird Conservation and the Important Bird Area (IBA) Program: It's All About Habitat."

While Carolyn was artfully guiding and maintaining the mission of Bird Observer as the Managing Editor, in 2004 her husband John quietly stepped up to take over her long-standing role as Subscription Manager. This transition ultimately resulted in the effective movement of the journal's subscription base into the digital age of the 21st century. The Board of Directors of Bird Observer will forever be in debt to John Marsh for his nearly seamless and effective management of the subscriptions and circulation of the journal during this tedious transition period. As if this wasn't long enough, John also graciously served on the Board of the journal from 2005-2011 and from 2014-2016. During these final three years, Carolyn also graciously agreed to serve as vice-president.

Unfortunately volunteerism often goes under-recognized. And in an organization where everyone since the genesis of the journal has been a volunteer, it can be difficult to single out individuals. However, in the case of Carolyn and John Marsh, it is a distinction clearly deserving of recognition. So without saying anything further, let it simply be said: Carolyn and John, a HUGE THANK YOU for all that you have done to help make our modest journal the publication that it is today, and for sharing your wisdom and good humor for all the years that you have given us. Best of luck in whatever you two decide to conquer next, and good birding always! 🐦



WHITE-EYED VIREO BY SANDY SELESKY

Twenty-first Report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee

Sean M. Williams and Jeremiah R. Trimble

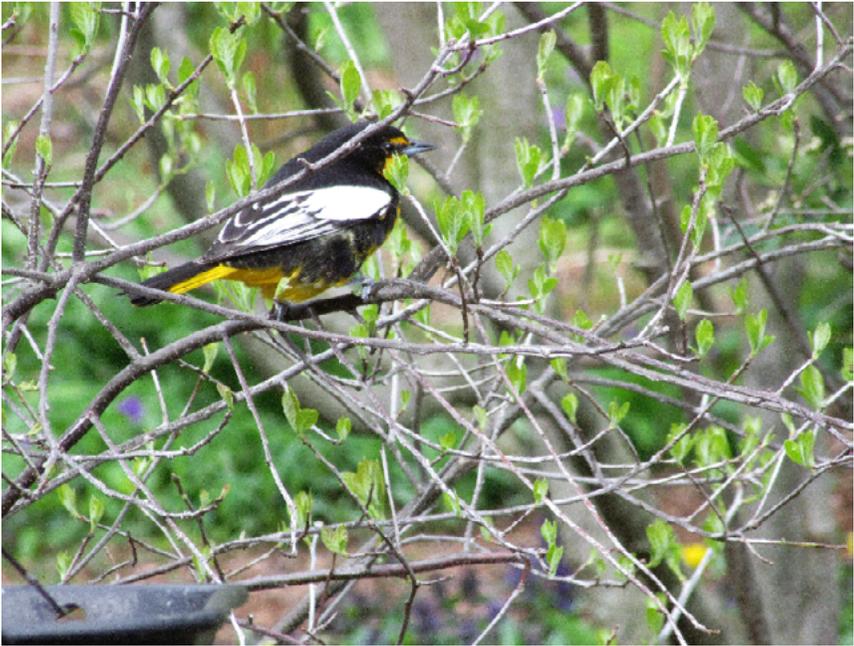


Common Greenshank, Gloucester, 12/8/2014. Photograph by Stan Deutsch.

The twenty-first report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (hereafter, MARC) covers the evaluation of 62 records involving 27 species. 56 records were accepted.

One species was added to the official state list, Common Greenshank, and two were removed, Thayer's Gull and Monk Parakeet. The official state list of Massachusetts currently stands at 501.

Tim Spahr and Brian Harris unearthed a photograph from the depths of the internet labeled as a Greater Yellowlegs, taken in Gloucester on December 8, 2014. The photographer confirmed the date and location of the photograph, which was also supported by metadata. The photograph indeed was a *Tringa* shorebird, but had dull yellow-green legs instead of bright yellow legs, a mostly white face with a large white gap between the bill and the dark coloration on the forehead, and uniform scapular feathers. The identification was clearly Common Greenshank. This record is not only a first for Massachusetts, but represents one of very few records in eastern North America. Coincidentally, only two weeks after this *post hoc* discovery, a Common Greenshank was found in New Jersey in late October 2017.



Black-backed Oriole, Putnam Hill Road, Sutton, 5/7/2017. Photograph by Margaret Bowden.

On May 7–8, 2017, a homeowner in Sutton noticed a bright orange oriole at their feeders that was not a Baltimore. They circulated photographs to some local birders, who were astonished to see it was a Black-backed Oriole, an endemic species of central Mexico! Not only that, but certain unique facial markings are identical to that of an individual that visited some feeders at Sinking Spring, PA in January-April 2017. It is a near certainty these two sightings are of the same individual. The committee unanimously rejected this record on the first round on the grounds of provenance. Black-backed Oriole is an altitudinal local migrant, and has not been shown to occur naturally outside of Mexico. In addition, the species is found in the caged bird trade to at least some capacity. The committee was not convinced that a wild origin was significantly more likely than a captive origin, so it decided to be cautious. Many more details and photos can be found on our website at maavianrecords.com/black-backed-oriole/.

This report treats records of two rare northern owls that both were identified originally as their southern congeners. During the Super Bowl of Birding XIV hosted by Mass Audubon, a small roosting owl was photographed and identified as a Northern Saw-Whet Owl. The photos, however, later revealed a Boreal Owl. Despite extensive searching, the owl was never relocated after the initial observation. In the Nungee Swamp in Hampshire County, a foraging owl in an open field was photographed and identified as a Barred Owl on eBird. Weeks after the fact, Brian Rusnica came across the eBird report of a Barred Owl and alerted the birding community to the apparent presence of a Great Gray Owl. Once again however, this owl was never refound.

Other highlights in the report include a Magnificent Frigatebird that was photographed during a whale watch at Stellwagen Bank in June 2017; eight Ross's Goose reports; four Mew Gull reports; and seven Painted Bunting reports. Ross's Geese clearly have exploded into the Northeast, with at least 19 total records in the past 10 years in Massachusetts alone, and only three scattered records prior to that.

During the annual meeting in December 2017, the committee decided to remove two species from the state list. Following recommendations of the American Ornithological Society, the committee delisted Thayer's Gull as a full species and instead now considers it a subspecies of Iceland Gull (Chesser et al. 2017). Furthermore, the committee removed Monk Parakeet from the official state list since no records of this species have received any official action from the committee. The MARC would welcome any submissions of older records of this species from the state.

The website of the committee received a dramatic renovation, with several new features added such as a report form and a searchable database of all accepted records. Visit here: www.maavianrecords.com.

The 2016–17 roster of MARC voting members included Nick Block, Ian Davies, Mark Faherty, Jessica Johnson, Wayne Petersen, Tim Spahr, Ryan Schain, Scott Sumner, and Jeremiah R. Trimble (chair). Sean Williams served as secretary.

In this truncated report, we present basic statistics for each record of each species or taxon covered: the record number, count of individuals, where and when the bird was seen, and who submitted evidence. We also indicate if the evidence provided was photographic (ph), video (v), audio (au), or a written submission (†). As always, the committee strongly encourages written submissions even where photographs exist. When known, we try to credit the discoverer with an asterisk (*), especially if he or she has supplied evidence. The statistics in brackets for each species or taxon show the number of individual birds accepted through records in this report, followed by the total number of MARC-accepted individual records for that species.

Species taxonomy and nomenclature follow the seventh edition of the American Ornithological Society (AOS, recently changed from American Ornithologists' Union) *Check-list of North American Birds* (AOU 1998) and its supplements (Chesser et al. 2009, Chesser et al. 2010, Chesser et al. 2011, Chesser et al. 2012, Chesser et al. 2013, Chesser et al. 2014, Chesser et al. 2015, Chesser et al. 2016, Chesser et al. 2017).

The list of species reviewed by the MARC (the Review List) is available at <www.maavianrecords.com>. Please check out the full Review List and send us any evidence of new or old records you may have—even in this Information Age we often do not receive sufficient information for many records.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) [1, 9]

2014-071: 1 at Cohasset Golf Club, Southbridge, *Worcester*, 6/9/2014 to 6/22/2014 [Vivian Brooks* (ph)]

Ross's Goose (*Anser rossii*) [8, 22]

2016-025: 1 at Parker River NWR to Ipswich fields, *Essex*, 12/28/2016 to 1/7/2017 [Tom Whetmore, Suzanne Sullivan (ph)]

2017-019: 1 at Sudbury Reservoir, *Worcester*, 3/12/2017 to 3/13/2017 [Mark Lynch and Sheila Carroll*, Justin Lawson (ph)]

2017-020: 1 at Westborough Reservoir, Westborough, *Worcester*, 3/28/2017 to 3/30/2017 [Bette Robo* (ph)]

2017-031: 1 at Longmeadow Flats, Longmeadow/Agawam, *Hampden*, 1/18/2017 [Dorrie Holmes* (ph)]

2017-033: 1 at Bear Creek Sanctuary, Saugus, *Essex*, 1/14/2017 to 2/1/2017 [Geoff Wilson* (ph)]

2017-034: 1 at Arcade Pond, Whitinsville, *Worcester*, 2/23/2017 to 2/24/2017 [Edward Kittredge*, Sean Williams (ph)]

2017-035: 1 at Arlington Reservoir, Arlington, and Waltham Street Fields, Lexington, *Middlesex*, 3/3/2017 to 3/8/2017 [John Andrews* (ph), Chris Floyd (ph)]

2017-036: 1 at Corbin's Neck, Bartholomew's Cobble (TTOR), Ashley Falls, *Berkshire*, 4/20/2017 [Greg Ward* (ph)]

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) [3, 13]

2016-022: 1 at West Newbury, Newburyport, and Ipswich, *Essex*, 11/6/2016 to 3/10/2017 [Robert Gervais*]

2016-023: 1 at Stockbridge Street, Hadley, UMass Amherst Campus Pond, Amherst, *Hampshire*, 12/6/2016 to 12/10/2017 [Larry Therrien* (ph)]

2016-024: 1 at Cambridge Reservoir and at Newbury Field, Concord, *Middlesex*, 12/4/2017 to 12/15/2017 [Cliff Cook*, Jason Forbes (ph)]

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [6, 23]

2016-026: 1 at Johnson Pond, Groveland and Kenoza Lake, Haverhill, *Essex*, 10/23/2016 to 12/22/2016 [Marj Watson* (ph)]

2016-027: 1 at Sesachacha Pond, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 12/31/2016 to 4/23/2017 [Sean Williams* (ph)]

2017-037: 1 at Silver Lake, Wilmington, *Middlesex*, 3/16/2017 to 3/18/2017 [Suzanne Sullivan* (ph)]

2017-039: 1 at Great Herring Pond, Plymouth, *Plymouth*, 3/26/2017 to 4/2/2017 [Alan Kneidel* (ph), Nathan Marchessault*]

2017-041: 1 at Keyes Brook Pond, Princeton, *Worcester*, 5/14/2017 to 5/15/2017 [Tom Pirro* (ph)]

2017-059: 1 at Pocksha Pond, Lakeville, *Plymouth*, 2/19/2017 to 3/19/2017 [Jim Sweeney* (ph)]

Pacific Loon (*Gavia pacifica*) [2, 25]

2017-018: 1 at Head of the Meadow, Truro, *Barnstable*, 6/30/2017 [Matt Levanowitz* (ph)]

2017-049: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 6/7/2017 [Blair Nikula*, Peter Trimble* (ph)]

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) [1, 4]

2017-015: 1 at Stellwagen Bank, *Barnstable*, 6/10/2017 [Joanne Jarzowski* (ph)]

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*) [1,6]

2017-013: 1 at Ludlow, MA, *Hampden*, June 2017 [courtesy of Jean Yobst-Fournier (ph)]. Amazingly, a Brown Booby was perched on the guard rail of a bridge under construction in Ludlow. A passerby photographed and posted it to a local bird photography Facebook group, where it quickly gained attention.

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) [4, 12]

2017-050: 1 at Crane Beach, Ipswich (5/6), Annisquam, Gloucester (5/6), Point of Pines, Revere (5/8), *Essex/Suffolk*, 5/6/2017 to 5/8/2017 [Nathan Dubrow* (ph), Robert Sherman* (ph), Eric Harrison* (ph)]

2017-051: 1 at Newburyport to Cape Ann, *Essex*, 6/17/2017 to 7/30/2017 [Michael Densmore* (ph), Rick Heil (ph), Max McCarthy (ph)]

2017-052: 1 at Squantum, Quincy, *Norfolk*, 7/7/2017 [Matt Garvey* (ph)]

2017-053: 1 at Great Point, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 7/1/2017 [Allison Renaud* (ph)]

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) [1, 23]

2017-040: 1 at Seaview Farm, Rockport, *Essex*, 5/13/2017 [Sean Williams* (ph), Jacob Socolar*]



Mississippi Kite, Provincetown, 6/4/2017. Photograph by Sean Williams.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) [1, 14]

2017-008: 1 at Mashpee NWR, Mashpee and Falmouth, *Barnstable*, 4/17/2017 [Karen Fiske*]

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*) [2, 15]

2017-044: 3 at Province Lands, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 6/4/2017 [Sean Williams* (ph)]

2017-045: 2 at Beech Forest, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 5/19/2017 [Maryellen Stone* (ph)]

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*) [1, 10]

2017-042: 1 at Miacomet Pond, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 5/27/2017 to 5/30/2017 [Libby Buck* (ph)]

Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [1, 13]

2017-054: 1 at Nauset Marsh, Orleans to Pleasant Bay (lastly on South Beach), Chatham, *Barnstable*, 06/17/2017 to 07/19/2017 [Blair Nikula (ph)]

Common Greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*) [1, 1]

2014-072: 1 at Gloucester, *Essex*, 12/8/2014 [Stan Deutsch* (ph), Tim Spahr, Brian Harris]



Franklin's Gull, Race Point, Provincetown, 6/3/2017. Photograph by Blair Nikula.

Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) [4, 17]

2017-046: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 6/2/2017 to 6/15/2017 [Blair Nikula* (ph), Joe Bourget* (ph)]

2017-047: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 6/16/2017 to 6/17/2017 [Peter Flood]

2017-048: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 6/7/2017 [Blair

Nikula*, Peter Trimble* (ph)]

2017-061: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 6/24/2017 to 6/29/2017 [Peter Flood* (ph)]. How many Franklin's Gulls were present at Race Point in June 2017? Apparently no fewer than four, as is evident by varying molts of well-photographed birds. Historically, June has not been a month typically associated with Franklin's Gull records in Massachusetts.

Mew Gull (*Larus canus*) [4, 12]

2017-003: 1 at Lynn Beach, Nahant, *Essex*, 2/25/2017 to 2/28/2017 [John Quigley* (ph), Joe Bourget (ph), Dan Prima]

2017-005: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 3/26/2017 [Blair Nikula* (ph)]

2017-006: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 4/15/2017 [Will Sweet* (ph)]

2017-007: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 4/15/2017 [Alan Kneidel*, Nathan Marchessault* (ph)]. Lightning struck twice on April 15, 2017 at Race Point.



Above left, Mew Gull, Race Point, Provincetown, 4/23/2017. Photograph by Will Sweet.
Above right, Mew Gull, Race Point, Provincetown, 4/23/2017. Photograph by Alan Kneidel.

Will Sweet was birding independent of Alan Kneidel and Nathan Marchessault and both parties reported a Mew Gull. Of course, the logical conclusion would have been that the same bird had been sighted twice. However, photographs revealed two completely different individuals, one a clean, breeding-plumaged “European” Mew Gull and a streaky-headed “Kamchatka” Mew Gull!

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) [1, 24]

2017-043: 1 at Schoolhouse Pond, Chatham, *Barnstable*, 6/2/2017 [James Junda* (ph)]. Chatham seems to be a mecca for rare doves of Massachusetts.



Great Gray Owl, Nungee Swamp, Williamsburg, 2/22/2017. Photograph by David Pritchard

Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*) [1, 7]

2017-002: 1 at Nungee Swamp, Williamsburg, *Hampshire*, 2/22/2017 [David Pritchard* (ph)]

Boreal Owl (*Aegolius funereus*) [1, 9]

2017-001: 1 at Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary, Topsfield, *Essex*, 1/28/2017 [Andrea Bean* (ph)]

Boreal Chickadee (*Poecile hudsonicus*) [Added to review list 2017; one record since then]

2017-032: 1 at 16 Bonny Lane, Peru, *Berkshire*, 1/2/2017 to 2/5/2017 [Richard Guthrie* (ph)]. This species has become very scarce in Massachusetts, with only a couple records in the past 10 years. The previous record was a bird that stayed

for a few days in Squantum in November 2010.

Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*) [1, 4]

2017-004: 1 at Bear Creek Sanctuary, Saugus, *Essex*, 3/15/2017 to 4/9/2017 [Geoff Wilson* (ph)]. A Smith's Longspur was present at Bear Creek Sanctuary for the second year in a row. It is entirely up to speculation as to whether there are one or two individuals involved. The first record occurred 12/21/2015 to 1/20/2016.

Harris's Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*) [1, 12]

2017-060: 1 at Otis Avenue, Dalton, *Berkshire*, 11/25/2016 to 5/11/2017 [Gael Hurley* (ph)]

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*) [Added to review list 2017; one record since then]

2017-012: 1 at Quabbin Park, Belchertown, *Hampshire*, 5/31/2017 to 06/03/2017 [Larry Therrien* (ph)]

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) [7, 23]

2016-020: 1 female at Melrose Highlands, Melrose, *Middlesex*, 11/27/2016 [Devin Hefferon* (ph)]

2016-021: 2 (male and female) at Dukes Road, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 11/27/2016 to 1/21/2017 [Trish Pastuszak* (ph)]

2017-038: 1 male at 229 Brick Hill Road, Orleans, *Barnstable*, 2/5/2017 to 04/14/2017 [Sue Finnegan (ph)]

2017-055: 1 female at Madaket, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 05/12/2017 [Trish Pastuszak* (ph)]

2017-056: 1 male at Mountain View Drive, Huntington, *Hampshire*, 5/1/2017 to 5/2/2017 [Larry Therrien (ph)]

2017-057: 1 at Jewett Road, Sterling, *Worcester*, 5/25/2017 [Marion McDermott*]

2017-058: 1 at Blantyre Road, Centerville, *Barnstable*, 12/17/2016 to 12/19/2016 [Linda Iafrate (ph)]

NOT ACCEPTED

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*)

2017-016: 1 at Salisbury Beach, Salisbury, *Essex*, 6/13/2017. This report potentially could have pertained to the same individual as 2017-015, although the members felt that the photograph was inconclusive and the description was too brief to rule out other frigatebird species, and potentially other seabirds.

Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*)

2017-017: 2 at Salem, *Essex*, 6/17/2017 to 6/24/2017. It is difficult yet critical to evaluate certain features on *Streptopelia* doves, which include the color of the back

and primaries, the color of the undertail coverts, and if the black coloration on other outer vane of the outer rectrix extends more posteriorly than the black coloration on the inner vane. These features are necessary to rule out the similar *Streptopelia* doves and their intergrades, which are common pets in the caged bird trade. Unfortunately, this report did not include those details and, therefore the committee determined that the supporting documentation for this identification was inconclusive.

Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*)

2017-010: 1 at Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary, Marblehead, *Essex*, 5/23/2017. Certainly an intriguing report of an incredibly difficult identification. This record was supported by a description, photographs, and an audio recording. This report received support from a couple members who felt that the reddish tones of the bird coupled with the final phrase of the song being up-slurred was sufficient for acceptance. However, most members were not convinced that the photos and description of the physical appearance ruled out Gray-cheeked, although some members commented that separation of Gray-cheeked and Bicknell's Thrushes by physical appearance alone in the field may be impossible. The audio recording and description was the more critical part of this record. The songs of Gray-cheeked and Bicknell's Thrushes are distinct, with the final part of the song being typically down-slurred in Gray-cheeked and up-slurred in Bicknell's. The Bicknell's overall has a higher-pitched song than Gray-cheeked. Again, a couple members felt that they indeed could hear the final part of the song and that it corresponded to a typical Bicknell's. The other members, however, felt that the audio was not clear enough to be certain they were hearing the correct song, let alone the correct parts of the song. In addition, Gray-cheeked Thrushes can give isolated songs that contain an up-slurred final note similar to a Bicknell's. Therefore, for Bicknell's Thrush records in Massachusetts, it is critical to listen to a singing thrush over several songs and note whether the final parts of the songs are consistently up-slurred or down-slurred. Because the audio recording and description only pertained to a single song and despite the observers' excellent efforts at documenting this record, the members did not feel that Gray-cheeked had been ruled out with certainty.

Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)

2017-009: 1 at Borderland State Park, North Easton, *Bristol*, 4/23/2017 [Stephen Peabody*, Zach Moser*]. The description did not attempt to rule out intergrades with Blue-winged Warbler (*Vermivora cyanoptera*).

2017-011: 1 at Hopkins Memorial Forest, Williamstown, *Berkshire*, 5/28/2017 to 5/30/2017 [Ken Schopp* (ph)]. Photos revealed this bird had two whitish wing bars, which is a trait of Blue-winged Warbler.

Black-backed Oriole (*Icterus abeillei*)

2017-014: 1 at Putnam Hill Rd., Sutton, *Worcester*, 6/7/2017 to 6/8/2017 [Margaret Bowden* (ph)]. See the first part of this report for more details. 🐦

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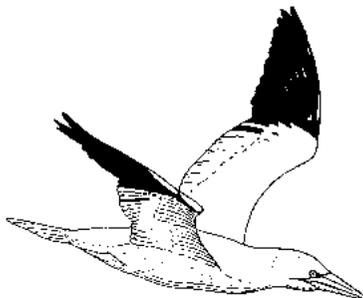


PHOTO ESSAY

Birds of the 21st MARC Report



Golden-winged Warbler, Quabbin Reservoir, 5/31/2017. Photograph by Larry Therrien.



Painted Bunting, Brick Hill Rd., Orleans, 2/28/2017. Photograph by Mary McMahon.



Boreal Chickadee, Bonny Lane, Peru. Photograph by Rene Wendell.



Purple Gallinule, Miacomet Pond, Nantucket, 5/28/2017. Photograph by Trish Pastuszak.

GLEANINGS

Feeders, Adaptation, and Fitness

David M. Larson



Great Tit. Photograph by Heather Smithers (CC-BY-SA 2.0).

We all know about anthropogenic changes in avian distribution and diversity—think loss of habitat, introduced species, and extinction, for example. Increased food supplies due to birdfeeders and introduction of non-native plants may have helped fuel range expansion in some species. Anthropogenic climate change threatens many species that are unable to adapt quickly enough. But there are more subtle changes out there, too.

Bosse, et al., 2017, studied morphological and genetic changes in

Great Tits (*Parus major*) that ultimately proved to result from human intervention in the form of birdfeeding. In the United Kingdom (UK), birdfeeders are widely employed in gardens, as opposed to in the Netherlands where they are much less common. The authors used fine scale ecological and genomic data to analyze adaptive evolution at separate locations in this well characterized, widely distributed, and abundant Old World passerine.

From a genomic point of view, Great Tits have a large effective population size and high levels of gene flow. The authors started off with genetic analysis of over 2000 Great Tits, focusing on nearly a half million single nucleotide DNA changes—single nucleotide polymorphisms or SNPs. Computer analysis of the SNPs identified some that appeared to be under different selection pressures in the populations from England and the Netherlands. The majority of the genomic regions identified contained genes associated with skeletal development, bone growth, and palate development. The strongest SNPs were at genes that had been previously associated with beak shape in studies on Darwin's finches (subfamily Geospizinae). Over 3000 of the total SNPs were associated with bill length variability, suggesting that bill length control depends on expression of many genes. These genomic analyses suggested that bill morphology might be differentially controlled in the English and Netherlands Great Tit populations and, indeed, UK Great Tits have longer bills than the continental birds.

The authors carried out further analyses on the *COL4A5* gene, a Type IV collagen gene, which was in a chromosomal segment most notably associated with variations in bill length. The analyses showed clear recent selection for longer bills in the UK population, with the *COL4A5-C* allele being much more abundant in the UK than in continental birds.

The mechanism of *COL4A5-C* selection leading to increased bill length was assessed by analyses of the reproductive success of birds containing this allele. The data showed that birds with one or two copies of the *COL4A5-C* allele were statistically more likely to successfully fledge young in the UK than were birds without that allele. Though not statistically significant, the opposite tendency was detected in the Netherlands birds. The authors suggest that adults possessing this allele have a fitness advantage in the UK population.

While there is no known difference in natural diet in UK versus mainland Europe Great Tits, there is a considerable difference in the availability of human-supplied birdseed. Birdfeeding in the UK has been widespread since the 19th century, and UK citizens spend twice as much on birdseed as the whole of mainland Europe. Great Tits are famously good at exploiting feeders, so the final piece of this puzzle is if feeder utilization could select for longer bills in Great Tits, as has been suggested for Eurasian Blackcaps (*Sylvia atricapilla*) by Rolshausen et al., 2009. Studies using RFID-enabled feeders in the British site over three winters showed that tits with two copies of the *COL4A5-C* allele were more likely to visit feeders than birds with one copy or none, and a follow-up study pairing feeding frequency with bill length showed a positive correlation.

Ultimately, this study provides a neat story of natural selection in a wild population of birds, starting from finding genetic differences in two remote populations, demonstrating a linkage between those genetic differences and genes important in bill morphology, breeding fitness as a measure of selection, and phenotypic variation and evolutionary change as a driver of selection. Clearly some of the connections in the chain of events can use further scrutiny, but the overall conclusion that Great Tits using birdfeeders in the UK show selection for longer bill length seems logical. Given the multi-gene basis of any morphological change, more studies are clearly needed to fill in the details. 🐦

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David M. Larson, PhD, is the Science and Education Coordinator at Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center in Newburyport, the Director of Mass Audubon's Birder's Certificate Program and the Certificate Program in Bird Ecology (a course for naturalist guides in Belize), a domestic and international tour leader, President of the Nuttall Ornithological Club, and a member of the editorial staff of Bird Observer.

FIELD NOTES

Yellow-Crowned Night-Heron Displaying

Marsha C. Salett and Jaden Thompson



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. Photographs by Jaden Thompson.

The J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, Florida, in February and March is a birder’s antidote to late winter in New England. At low and mid-tides, the exposed flats are teeming with waders and shorebirds. Late afternoon on March 23, 2017, after a passing cloudburst, my grandson Jaden and I timed our visit just right. Birding the refuge’s 4-mile Wildlife Drive, we saw White Pelicans, Roseate Spoonbills, several sandpipers including Black-necked Stilt (life bird for Jaden), and just about every species of egret and heron except for Yellow-crowned Night-Heron.

The last half-mile of the drive tends to be less birdy, but we like to stop at the two mangrove swamp overlooks to search for alligators in the shallows. At the first pool, we’d barely had time to scan for alligators when a small, bright yellow ball flew past us and landed on a branch just above water level. “Prothonotary Warbler!” Jaden and I called out simultaneously. It hopped about silently in full view—this had to be the bird of the day—and we were so enthralled at seeing the warbler low and close, that I don’t know how long it took us to register the strange h-whoop sounds that were definitely not part of the Prothonotary’s repertoire.

The h-whoops—repeated at short, regular intervals—were nearby and overhead. We looked up to find a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in full breeding plumage displaying on a bare branch diagonally over the water and directly above us, not more than 3–4 feet away. It ignored us completely and repeated its display approximately every 20 seconds. We’d finally found the last heron we were looking for. We scanned the mangroves looking for a female but found no other night-herons.

Neither of us had ever seen a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron display. Usually, the night-herons we see are the occasional juvenile skulking in the phragmites at Wellfleet

Bay Wildlife Sanctuary or birds flying high above as they leave the Eastham roost for the night.

This bird's display was magnificent with its fancy feathers, fanned-out wings, and striking yellow forehead brighter than its crown. Standing on the branch, the night-heron stretched its body fully upright but kept its beak horizontal. Then it leaned forward and in a swift, fluid motion lowered its breast—with its scapular plumes bursting up fanlike behind its head—until its breast grazed the bottom of the branch and was lower than its tail. At that point it flared its wings open and upward, transforming itself into a slaty gray fan with contrasting silvery plumes and a central yellow spot that glowed like a tiny sun. Then with a h-whoop, it reversed its movements and resumed its posture as a bird on a branch. The entire display took about three seconds. We were speechless with wonder. It reminded me somewhat of the display of a Bird of Paradise.

Later, when I accessed the refuge's website in search of its bird list, I found this fact about Yellow-crowned Night-Herons: "By building their nests over alligator habitats, their hatchlings are protected from other pesky predators like raccoons." https://www.fws.gov/refuge/JN_Ding_Darling/Big_five.html So from now on, we'll look down into the mangrove swamp waters for alligators and up into the mangrove trees for Yellow-crowned Night-Herons and their nests. 🦘

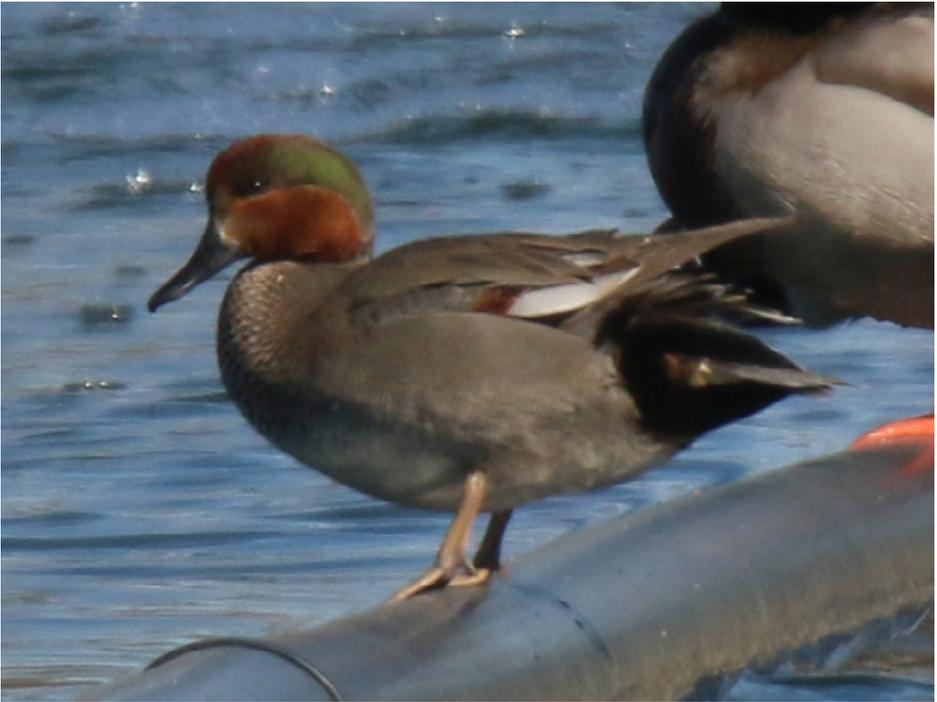
Presumed Gadwall x Green-winged Teal Hybrid

Nate Marchessault

While visiting the Marion Water Treatment Plant on December 20, 2017, I noticed an interesting duck. The outing started as usual by my climbing up on adjacent compost piles to view the various species of ducks that favor these retention ponds, such as Gadwalls, American Wigeons, American Black Ducks, Mallards, Northern Shovelers, and Green-winged Teal. As I scanned the ducks, a bird that I almost passed off as a Green-winged Teal caught my attention. Further examination of this bird revealed that, although it clearly had a lineage that included a Green-winged Teal, it was not a "pure" Green-winged Teal; there were other genes in the mix.

The first thing I noticed was that the bird was larger than the typical Green-winged Teal in the pond, but it was smaller than the other nearby dabblers and more nearly the size of the shovelers. The bird lacked a vertical white line between the side and chest, which would typically be present on the American subspecies of the Green-winged Teal. It also lacked the horizontal white line along the side, which one would expect to see on the Eurasian or "Common" Teal. The creamy white patch on the undertail coverts that is typical of Green-winged Teal was also much subdued and mostly replaced with black.

Before describing the features that made me conclude that the bird was probably a hybrid Gadwall x Green-winged Teal, I want to describe some of the other species that I considered and why I rejected them as possible parents of this bird. I considered



Presumed Gadwall x Green-winged Teal hybrid. Photograph by the author.

both American and Eurasian wigeon as possibilities, however the complete lack of any warm-brown coloration on the body eliminated American Wigeon. Further investigation of these wigeon hybrids also showed that most exhibit traces of light blue on the bill, which this bird did not have.

The closest contender then became Northern Pintail. From behind, the gray on the duck's body crept up the neck and onto the back of the head, which was suggestive of a male pintail. The smaller than average patch of creamy white on the undertail coverts also suggested the possibility of an intermediate feature between Green-winged Teal and Northern Pintail, as did the dull gray on the body and upper wing feathers. Other features were inconsistent with pintail, however, which made me conclude that this species was not one of the parents. The head shape of the hybrid was blocky, and did not in any way resemble the elegance of a pintail's head and long, slender neck. The tail was also average size for a dabbling duck, not slightly elongated as one might expect if there were pintail genes involved. The clincher for removing this species as a possibility was the white in the tertials of this bird, a feature lacking in Northern Pintail and Green-winged Teal.

The overall appearance of this bird was perfectly intermediate between a Gadwall and a Green-winged Teal. Even the size of the bird was intermediate between the two species. The head shape closely resembled that of a Gadwall, but plainly showed the pattern of a male Green-winged Teal. The back, much of the wing, and body coloration,

also seemed to be intermediate between the two: a bit warmer in color than the average Green-winged Teal and grayer than a male Gadwall. The cream-colored patch near the vent was subdued when compared to a Green-winged Teal, and much of it was replaced with black as in a typical Gadwall. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this bird was its wings. Most of the gray portions of the upper wings of the hybrid were typical of both species; however, the pure white secondaries with rufous brown coverts above clearly indicated its Gadwall origin, and a small portion of iridescent green on the secondaries adjacent to the white feathering suggested Green-winged Teal.

On a return trip to the Water Treatment Plant on January 27, 2018, I was amazed to see that the hybrid was still present. These ponds had frozen over completely in early January, so it must have departed temporarily and then returned later for more tasty sewage. On my second visit, I observed the hybrid quarreling with a male Gadwall over a female, but it was visibly overpowered by its larger competitor. The bird vocalized during this exchange and, interestingly, had the nasal quacks of a Gadwall. The bird was still present on January 29.

Gadwall x Green-winged Teal hybrids are apparently rare, although not unprecedented. There is significant range overlap in their breeding ranges. Both species readily breed in prairie regions throughout Canada and the western United States. Both species are also ground breeders that will nest in brush and tall grasses. The greatest barrier to crossbreeding between these two species would seem to be size variation between the two, which to me, would suggest that a drake Gadwall and a hen Green-winged Teal were the parents. Perhaps it's not the flashiest hybrid waterfowl, but incredibly interesting nonetheless. 🐦



SCARLET TANAGER BY SANDY SELESKY

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ABOUT BOOKS

Two Lives with Birds

Mark Lynch

One More Warbler: A Life with Birds. Victor Emanuel. 2017. Austin: University of Texas Press. Austin, Texas.

Field Guide to Birds of Massachusetts. Wayne R. Petersen. 2017. New York: Scott & Nix, Inc.

“Edgar Kincaid used to say, ‘Birds have it all.’” (p. 251, *One More Warbler*)

Between the 1970s and the late 1990s, birding evolved into the popular avocation we know today in the United States. Before those decades, birding, or “bird watching” as it was more typically known, was a hobby more for isolated adults, obscure nature clubs, or eager youths looking to earn a merit badge. There were no well-connected internet sites, Facebook pages, or apps for your phones, and there were very few field guides to birds of countries other than our own. Binoculars were large and unwieldy, and few people had scopes. The public image of the birder before the 1970s was based on classic sitcom characters like Jane Hathaway, played by Nancy Kulp, and Professor P. Caspar Biddle, played by Wally Cox, in the TV show *The Beverly Hillbillies*. People who watched birds were imagined to be introverted nerds who dressed in adult versions of scouting khakis, and when they spotted a bird it was often a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a name always good for a laugh. Although there are still some that fit that image of a Biddle Bird Watcher, and god love ‘em, many of today’s birders tend to be dressed in the latest outdoors gear, be unabashedly competitive, and are well connected to birding communities locally and nationally. They are likely to carry a top-of-the-line camera along with their bins. Today’s birders are often well traveled, not only throughout the states but also to other destinations around the world, and we have access to books and on-line resources that pre-1960s birdwatchers could only dream of.

The birding history of those critical decades of the last third of the twentieth century is sadly unknown by the legions of millennial birders. There are a number of individuals, many still alive, who through their groundbreaking field work, trip leading, teaching, and writing helped change the way we think about birding today. The following books are by two authors who in their own ways help bring birding into the twenty-first century.

“My mentors opened my eyes to birds and instilled in me an appreciation for all birds, not just the rare and unusual ones.” (p. 252, *One More Warbler*)

Victor Emanuel is best known to New England birders as the founder of VENT, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, one of the earliest tour businesses that catered to birders. *One More Warbler* is his entertaining memoir of his life with birds, and what a life it has been! Victor Emanuel was friends with or birded with a virtual *Who’s Who* of the birding world in the last decades of the twentieth century. Names like Robert

Ridgely, Kenn Kaufman, Roger Tory Peterson, Lars Jonsson, and Peter Alden pop up often throughout *One More Warbler*. He befriended George Plimpton, famous writer and journalist, and searched with him for the “thought-to-be-extinct” Imperial Woodpecker in Mexico. Victor Emanuel formed a life-long close friendship with internationally acclaimed novelist and nature writer Peter Matthiessen, and at one point set off on a three week Asian adventure with him to see all the Asian Crane species.

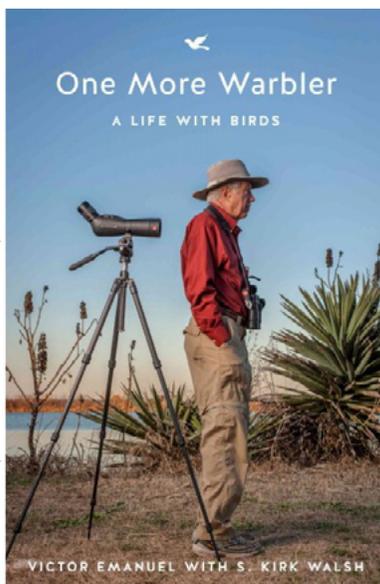
Some of these cameo appearances are surreal. Emanuel became acquainted with George W. and Laura Bush while Bush was still governor of Texas. Later, when Bush was President, Laura invited Emanuel to lead a birding outing for the wives of world leaders at the G8 conference on Sea Island, Georgia. What happened next was worthy of a *Saturday Night Live* skit:

Although Mrs. Putin was dressed more for a cocktail party than a bird outing, she appeared to be one of the most interested—other than Laura—in what we were seeing and asked many questions through her interpreter. Mrs. Blair was also engaged and told me that a member of her husband’s staff was an avid birder. Madame Chirac seemed the least interested in what we were seeing—almost to the point of boredom. She never lifted her binoculars; instead, her assistant carried the binoculars for her throughout the entire excursion. (p. 194, *One More Warbler*)

Emanuel was born in Houston, Texas, and though he has traveled to the far-flung corners of the globe, Texas is still where his birding heart lies. His second favorite place in the world is the valley of the El Triunfo volcano in Mexico where he has found the rare and local Horned Guan, along with many other species. He fell in love with the habitats, people, and birds of that area and has visited it numerous times.

At a very early age he became interested in “birds, butterflies, crayfish, snakes, turtles, and fish” (p. 4). Several events fortuitously happened to Emanuel that turned this childhood interest in the wonders of the natural world into a lifelong passion for birds. While in his young teens, he found older mentors by hanging out with the members of the Outdoor Nature Club, a rag-tag group of much older gentlemen. Two members in particular, Armand Yramategui and Joe Heiser, took him on long field trips, including trips to Mexico. From them he learned the joys of exploring new birding habitats and many keys to identifying species in the field. It is a testament to how much times have changed to think about how most parents today would react to the notion of a group of older men taking their young son on an overnight trip.

Emanuel was only ten years old when he participated in his first Christmas Bird



Count, the one in Houston, Texas. In 1955, at only 15 years old, he did his first out-of-state CBC in Xilitla, Mexico, where he saw his first Emerald Toucanets and Blue-crowned Motmots. Later, in 1957, he started the Freeport, Texas, CBC, which for many years was known for tallying the most species on any CBC in the United States and has attracted the participation of leading birders from all over the country. Also in 1957, he witnessed his first migrant “fallout” in Texas, and this event began his life-long passion for warblers.

It is fascinating to learn that Victor Emanuel almost did not have a “life with birds.” After graduating high school, he attended the University of Texas and later Harvard, studying political science with the goal to become a professor in that field. While at Harvard he met Peter Alden, then at the Massachusetts Audubon Society, who told Emanuel that he was now leading birding trips for MAS as a paying job. By the end of the sixties, Emanuel was working at the Institute for Urban Studies at the University of Houston, when he again bumped into Alden who regaled him with tales of his birding trips around the world. Emanuel then began to seriously envy Alden’s life and to question his own. What finally changed his life was when in 1970 he got a call from Illinois banker Dean Gorham who was in Texas on business. He asked Emanuel if he would take him and his wife out for a day’s birding for pay. Emanuel did, and from that humble beginning a life’s direction was forever changed and VENT was born.

One More Warbler is filled with Emanuel’s detailed stories of seeing bird species. On March 22, 1959, Victor Emanuel saw what he still declares is the “bird of my life” (p. 33), an Eskimo Curlew.

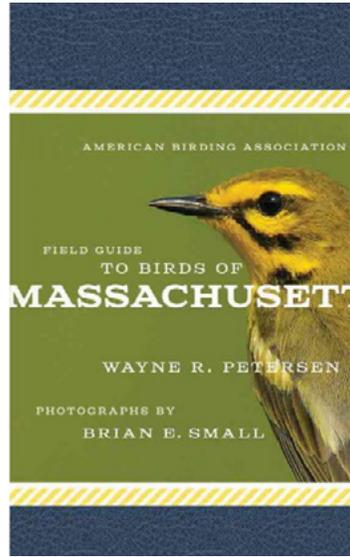
The short-grass pasture was dotted with fresh cow pies and surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. Among the many shorebirds in the field were American Golden Plovers, Black-bellied Plovers, Upland Sandpipers, Killdeer, Whimbrels, Long-billed Curlews, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Pectoral Sandpipers. Thanks to the recent dairy cattle droppings, the field was rich in invertebrate life, which provided an abundance of food for these birds. When I put up my binoculars, I immediately saw a small buffy curlew. I told my friends that we needed to get out of the car and set up our Bushnell scopes. (p. 35, *One More Warbler*)

What follows is the stuff of birding legends, and Emanuel devotes an entire chapter to his experiences seeing this likely now extinct North American shorebird.

One More Warbler is a wonderful read, an engrossing and entertaining account of a person who helped change the way we bird by offering guided birding excursions around the world, developing birding networks, and leading special programs for young birders. The book is also an interesting history of how birding has changed and evolved in the last 50 years. By the end of the book, Emanuel is obviously not as spry as he was in his youth, but he is still out in the field whenever he can be, enjoying birds, his passion and zeal undiminished. It is the perfect way that most of us would like to lead our birding life. Highly recommended.

“Massachusetts is the seventh smallest state in land area of any state in the United States, yet it boasts a total bird list of over 500 species, a number that places it among the top ten states in the country.” (p. xxvi, *Field Guide to Birds of Massachusetts*)

The American Birding Association is publishing a nifty (not a word I use often) new series of state bird guides. They are compact, sturdy, and beautifully illustrated with color photography. They are the perfect guides for serious beginning birders or as introductions to a state’s avifauna for out of state birders. Because of size constraints, not all of any state’s birds are covered— only the most frequently reported. Though there are certainly identification details for every species, each species account also includes notes on that species’ historical occurrence in that state and where in the state the species may most often appear. So far there are guides to the birds of Texas, California, New York, and the Carolinas. These ABA state guides are beautifully bound and illustrated, making them collectible by those of us who are fanatic ornithobibliophiles. One of the latest volumes in the series is the *Field Guide to Birds of Massachusetts* by Wayne R. Petersen.



Wayne Petersen is a name well known to birders. Among his many accomplishments, he has been the co-editor of the *Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas 2*, Director of the Massachusetts Important Bird Areas program, and New England Regional Editor for *North American Birds* magazine and the New England section of the Christmas Bird Counts. Petersen is also co-author of what is still one of the most important historical accounts of birds in the state, *Birds of Massachusetts* (Veit and Petersen 1993). He is also a member of the Board of Directors of *Bird Observer*. In 2005 he was the recipient of the American Birding Association Ludlow Griscom Award for outstanding contributions in regional ornithology. You would be hard-pressed to find a more knowledgeable author for a bird guide to Massachusetts.

The *Field Guide to Birds of Massachusetts* is a wonderfully concise introduction to birds in the state. There are sections on the ornithological history of the state, a month-by-month rundown of what birds to expect, and a fine west-to-east summary of the state’s ornithogeography. There are the usual sections on bird topology and an outstanding section on how to identify birds. The chatty and evocative accounts are unlike the usual terse descriptions found in most contemporary field guides, and this style makes it a guide you will actually read.

Each of the 248 species accounts is accompanied by at least one good color photograph by Brian Small. Most of the state’s breeding species are included as well as a good selection of the more regularly occurring migrants and winter visitors. Because the focus is solely on birds of Massachusetts, this is a perfect guide for beginning birders in this state as it narrows the possibilities of what they are looking at. There are

details of when and where the species is found, and basic identification information is written next to the photographs.

As with any limited guide, there will always be disagreements over which species were included and which were left out. Personally, I find the omission of Ruffed Grouse and the inclusion of the Ring-necked Pheasant problematic. Certainly, grouse are still a fairly common, if declining, breeding species in central and western parts of the state. Yet the pheasant is actually no longer even counted as a viable species in those same areas, all sightings being attributed to game farm releases. We just don't find broods of pheasants in these areas anymore. I also found that though "the Berkshires" and "Quabbin" were often cited as general locations to find certain species, there could have been a few more specific interior state locations included in the species accounts. But these are minor criticisms for what overall is a very well produced and nicely written regional guide.

The *Field Guide to Birds of Massachusetts* is the perfect guide for young and novice birders as well as anyone who likes the outdoors in the state and wants to know more about what birds they see. To have such a guide written by one of the foremost authorities on birds in the state is the frosting on the cake. 🐦

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Masked Booby, by Dave Parish

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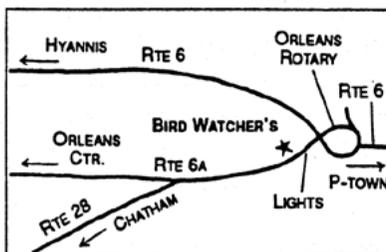
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BIRD SIGHTINGS

November–December 2017

Neil Hayward and Robert H. Stymeist

Weather

The warmer than average temperatures in October continued into early November; a high of 75 degrees in Boston on November 3 was 20 degrees above normal for that date. The first official freeze in Boston occurred on November 11 when the overnight low was 23 degrees. The month averaged 44 degrees, just one degree below normal. Rainfall was only 1.8 inches, four inches below the average for November.

December was cold. The temperature in Boston averaged 31 degrees, four degrees below the monthly average. Total precipitation for December in the form of rain was 2.49 inches, 1.29 inches below the average. The first blast of winter occurred just before the start of the Christmas Bird Count period; on December 9 the first significant snowstorm dumped 6–8 inches with the higher totals south and west of Boston. It was a white Christmas for all of New England. Boston recorded 2.9 inches of snow with more north of the city. High winds buffeted the coast, especially Cape Cod and the Islands, with gusts up to 65 mph. Arctic air moved into our area after the Christmas storm and Boston broke a nearly 100-year old record; the lowest high temperature on December 28 was just 12 degrees, six degrees lower than the previous record of 18 degrees set in 1924.

R. Stymeist

GEESE THROUGH HERONS

There are seven species of wild goose on the Massachusetts state list and, with a bit of driving, all seven could be chased this period. The rarest, a **Pink-footed Goose**, was in Westfield for the first two days of November, and then possibly the same bird appeared as a one-day wonder farther north at Turners Falls on November 5. A **Barnacle Goose** continued in the Westfield area from the previous period and may have been responsible for additional sightings in Longmeadow and central Connecticut. This was a good year for **Ross's Goose**; six individuals were recorded at four coastal locations. This year marks the twentieth anniversary since the species was first admitted to the state list (Sunderland, March 25–26, 1997). Ross's Goose has undergone a range shift in Arctic nesting sites, which has brought more to the East Coast. It has been recorded annually in Massachusetts since 2008. This was also an above average period for **Cackling Goose** and **Greater White-fronted Goose**, with both reported from more than 10 locations.

A **Tundra Swan** was seen by many on Farrar Pond, Lincoln, on November 10, before disappearing the next day.

Eurasian Wigeon numbers were particularly strong this period, with reports from eight locations. Three of the ten birds involved were females, reflecting a growing confidence in identifying the more cryptic sex. Nantucket hosted a male **Tufted Duck** for the fifth year in a row. An additional male was present in Lakeville. Tufted Duck has been recorded every year in Massachusetts since 1995 with the exception of 2006 and 2008. **King Eiders** were reported in good numbers from all the usual locations. A female at Deer Island in Boston Harbor is the first Suffolk County record since January 2012. Redheads are enjoying an excellent year. A high of 17

birds on Nantucket is the highest period count since 1979, when 67 were reported in Falmouth. The period featured a couple of interesting potential duck hybrids: an American Wigeon x Mallard hybrid in Plymouth in November; and a Common Goldeneye x Barrow's Goldeneye in Boston Harbor in December. Both birds were photographed.

An **Eared Grebe** was sighted off Race Point in Provincetown from December 2–5. This species never used to be so difficult in Massachusetts. Many local birders remember the individual that spent the winter of 1995 off Niles Beach in East Gloucester and returned each winter for the next 13 years. Since then, there have been five records, four of which were on the Cape. This year's record is the first since January 2015.

Last period's late show of Yellow-billed Cuckoos continued into the first week of November, buoyed by strong southwesterly tail winds at the end of October. A bird found on November 12 in Chestnut Hill was the first November record for Norfolk County.

Thirty-nine years ago, in April 1978, the first *Selasphorus* hummingbird of the state buzzed into a Newton backyard. This western genus includes two extremely similar species, Allen's and Rufous, and the color slides of that first pioneer couldn't distinguish between the two. Ten years later, a *Selasphorus* hummingbird fortuitously flew into a mist net in Nantucket, allowing identification as Allen's by measurement of the tail feathers. And finally, in 1992, a Rufous Hummingbird was videotaped in Holyoke, and the stop action frames revealed its own definitive tail feather pattern. Since then, of course, we've witnessed a truly remarkable explosion of late fall and wintering western hummingbirds in the east (see *Bird Observer* Vol. 45, No.5, 303–308). Since that first definitive record in 1992, **Rufous Hummingbird** has been recorded every year since, except for three years. This period's female in Hingham from November 12 to December 14 is the second record this year, following an overwintering bird in Falmouth at the start of the year. The average this century is 2.6 birds per year.

Perhaps surprisingly, our own familiar Ruby-throated Hummingbird is much less common in winter than Rufous Hummingbird. A bird present in Medford from November 12–December 14 is only the fourth December eBird record for the state, and the only Ruby-throat remaining north of Cape May, New Jersey.

Sandhill Cranes were spotted in seven locations, including the 2017 nonbreeding summering locales of Tolland and Burrage Pond.

Piping Plovers have typically departed the state by the end of September. A bird present at Plum Island until November 12 was rare, its departure delayed (and its fate probably sealed) by an injured wing. Semipalmated Plovers are hardier, with a number of overwintering records. Birds seen in Duxbury and Orleans in the last week of the year were the most northerly stragglers remaining on the East Coast.

There are few December records of Semipalmated Sandpipers in the United States and only two records in Massachusetts. Birds typically leave the country earlier to complete their pre-basic molt in Mexico and the Caribbean. An intriguing report from Chatham in the last week of December of Semipalmated/Western Sandpiper would be exceptionally late for either species.

Up to three Western Willets continued in Chatham through November 21. Eastern Willets, subspecies *semipalmata*, are coastal breeders, and typically leave the state by the end of September to spend the winter in South America. The larger, longer-billed western subspecies, *inornata*, that breeds in the Great Plains and prairies remains in the country, wintering along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. (Willet is often touted as a potential split based on differences in morphology, voice, range and nesting habitat.) Although uncommon in Massachusetts, Western Willet is the expected Willet in winter.

PARASITIC JAEGER
NUMBER OF DAYS RECORDED IN MASSACHUSETTS IN NOV, DEC

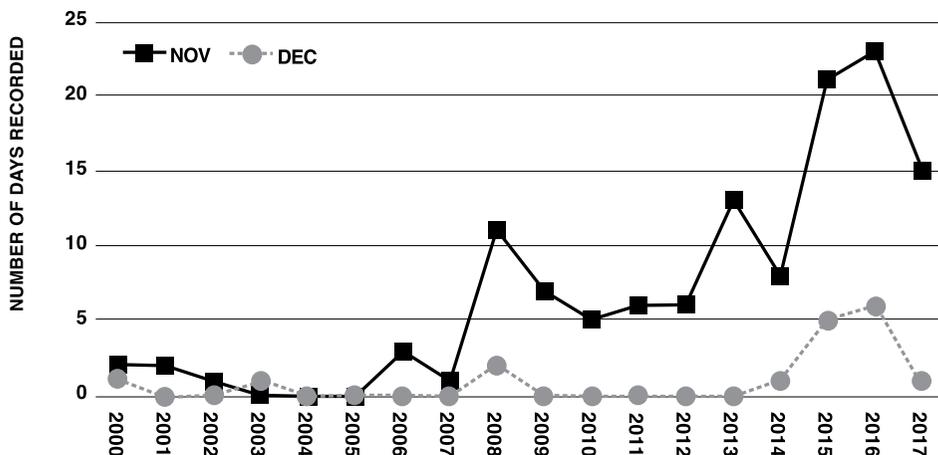


Figure 1. Parasitic Jaeger: occurrence in Massachusetts as number of days recorded in November (solid line) and December (dotted line) from 2000–2017. Data from eBird.org.

Despite the rarity of winter phalaropes, both species were reported in December. A Red-necked Phalarope, swimming off Mashpee on December 6, is the only December record for the state, and only the third December record on the Atlantic Coast (the other two were from North Carolina). Red-necked Phalaropes have typically left the country in November to spend the winter at sea in the southern hemisphere. Two days after the Red-necked, a probable Red Phalarope was spotted off Gooseberry Neck, only the eighth December record and the first since 2013.

Parasitic Jaegers are lingering in our waters longer than they have in the past, now staying well beyond their historical October departure (see Figure 1). This year saw birds through November and even into December.

Alcid numbers were about average for the period. Stellwagen Bank predictably supported some of the larger numbers; a boat trip on December 18 recorded 138 Dovekies and an impressive 19 **Atlantic Puffins** (a new high count for December).

In recent winters, Laughing Gulls haven’t been laughing so much as shivering. For the past two years large numbers have lingered into a chilly December (high counts of 60 in 2015 and 250 in 2016). This year, most of them got the message to leave in November, with only a handful staying into December. Otherwise, gull action was about average for the period: **Black-headed Gulls** and **Little Gulls** were reported from five and two coastal locations, respectively.

The “P’Town P’Loon Magnet” was working well this period, attracting three Pacific Loons on December 27, tying the state high count set in the spring of 2016.

All four species of regularly-occurring shearwater were reported this period. In recent years, Cory’s especially have lingered into November often in large numbers. This year’s 600 off Provincetown on November 1 would have been spectacular in the years before 2014 when the species started to appear in the thousands.

Both species of pelican were reported again this period. Presumably the same **Brown Pelican** that has been spotted up and down the North Shore this summer was seen at Nahant and Sandy Neck in November. A probable **American White Pelican** stopped in Marshfield for a day, representing the only December record for Plymouth County.

November has become a reliable month for **Cattle Egrets**, and this year four were scattered around the state. None lingered into December.

N. Hayward

Snow Goose				11/6-12/24	Barnstable	1	M. Keleher + v.o.
11/18, 12/16	PI	7,1	A. Gurka# + v.o.	11/11-11/19	Concord	1	S. Perkins + v.o.
12/14	Sheffield	17	J. Pierce	11/14	Orleans	3	P. Crosson
12/23	Eastham	3	C. Wagner	11/18	Carver	1	v.o.
12/24	Nantucket	4	S. Kardell	11/24	Nahant	2	D. Burton
12/28-12/31	Westfield	4	D. Holmes	12/7	PI	1	T. Graham#
12/29	Chilmark	15	P. Trimble#	Northern Shoveler			
Ross's Goose				11/2	PI	13	S. Williams
12/8-12/31	Nantucket	1 imm ph	R. Ouren#	11/13	Worcester	10	P. Morlock
12/24-12/31	Boston	1 ph	J. Pietrzak + v.o.	11/18	Marion	5	G. d'Entremont#
12/25	Gloucester	1	D. Lovitch#	12/19	Woburn (HP)	5	B. Lee#
12/29	Edgartown	1 ph	M. Iliff#	12/30	Nantucket	5	F. Gallo#
12/30	Nantucket	2 ad ph	F. Gallo#	Gadwall			
Greater White-fronted Goose				11/3	Longmeadow	5	M. Moore
11/2-12/8	Rutland area	1	M. Lynch# + v.o.	11/18	Marion	67	G. d'Entremont#
11/5-12/10	Egremont area	1	J. Pierce	12/11	Ipswich	84	N. Dubrow
11/9	Granby	1 ad	B. Zajda	12/11	PI	80	T. Wetmore
11/14-12/28	Westfield	3 max	D. Holmes	Eurasian Wigeon			
11/19-11/26	Ipswich	1 ad	M. Goetschkes, S. Grinley	11/8	Sudbury Res.	1 f	M. Lynch#
11/27-12/26	Boston	1 ad ph	M. Iliff + v.o.	11/16-12/30	Nantucket	2 max m	v.o.
12/2-12/9	Agawam area	2 max	S. Motyl + v.o.	11/18, 12/26	Somerset area	1 ph	A. Eckerson# + v.o.
12/22-12/28	Taunton area	1 ph	J. Sweeney + v.o.	11/25-12/8	Ipswich	1 m	J. Berry#
12/25	Gloucester	1	S. Grinley#	12/10-12/27	Plymouth	2 m,f	B. Griffith# + v.o.
12/26, 12/28	Nbpt H.	3,1	C. Marchant	12/12-12/16	E. Sandwich	1	P. Crosson + v.o.
Pink-footed Goose				12/23, 12/26	Dennis area	1	P. Flood, M. Faherty
11/1-11/2	Westfield	1	D. Holmes + v.o.	12/29	MV	1 f	M. Iliff#
11/5	Turner's Falls	1	J. Layfield#	American Wigeon			
Brant				thr	PI	60 max	T. Wetmore
11/1	Deerfield	35	R. Packard	11/12	Waltham	11	J. Forbes
11/1	Sudbury	22	B. Harris	11/18	Marion	32	G. d'Entremont#
11/1	E. Boston (BI)	60	P. Peterson	12/11	Ipswich	96	N. Dubrow
11/4	Eastham (FH)	110	G. d'Entremont#	American Wigeon x Mallard (hybrid)			
11/24	Nahant	300	D. Burton	11/27	Plymouth	1 ph	L. Schibley
Barnacle Goose				American Black Duck			
11/1-12/28	Westfield	1	D. Holmes	11/9, 12/2	PI	700,397	R. Heil
12/3-12/16	Longmeadow	1	v.o.	11/25	Acoaxet	206	M. Lynch#
Cackling Goose				Northern Pintail			
11/1-12/31	Westfield	1 ph	D. Holmes + v.o.	thr	PI	280 max	T. Wetmore
11/1-12/24	Sharon	1 ph	M. Iliff + v.o.	11/25	Acoaxet	37	M. Lynch#
11/4-12/3	Egremont area	1 ph	G. Ward + v.o.	11/25	Ipswich	63	J. Berry#
11/5-12/12	Rochester	1 ph	M. Iliff + v.o.	Green-winged Teal			
11/12-12/10	Northampton	1 ph	K. Yakola + v.o.	thr	PI	550 max	T. Wetmore
11/17-12/3	Middleton	1 ph	W. Tatro# + v.o.	11/9	Quabog IBA	17	M. Lynch#
11/24-12/28	Berkley	1 ph	J. Eckerson + v.o.	11/18	Marion	66	G. d'Entremont#
12/1-12/2	Concord (NAC)	1 ph	S. Williams + v.o.	11/28	Orleans	80	R. Heil
12/9-12/30	Agawam area	2 max ph	N Dowling + v.o.	Canvasback			
12/10-12/30	Halifax area	1 ph	J. Sweeney + v.o.	11/1	Sharon	1 m	V. Zollo
12/24	Mansfield	1 ph	J. Sweeney	11/2-11/9	Cambr. (FP)	1 m	v.o.
Mute Swan				11/16-12/31	Nantucket	70 max	R. Ouren
11/10	Waltham	38	J. Forbes	Redhead			
11/18	Westboro	133	M. Lynch#	11/5	Stockbridge	5	M. Kelly
Tundra Swan				11/6	Gill	3	J. Smith
11/10	Lincoln	1	J. Forbes + v.o.	12/8-12/31	Nantucket	17 max	v.o.
Wood Duck				12/19-12/21	Falmouth	2	G. Hirth
11/2	PI	9	S. Williams	Ring-necked Duck			
11/9, 12/14	GMNWR	32,3	A. Bragg#	11/1-12/21	Cambr. (FP)	151 max	R. Stymeist + v.o.
12/17	Boston	22	G. d'Entremont#	11/8	Sudbury Res.	2,789	M. Lynch#
12/19	Brookline	21	P. Peterson	11/11	W. Newbury	380	D. Williams
Blue-winged Teal				11/18	Randolph	240	M. Iliff + v.o.
11/1	N. Truro	2	J. Pratt	12/14	Stockbridge	68	G. Ward

Ring-necked Duck (continued)				11/8	Sudbury Res.	88	M. Lynch#
12/16	Waltham	100	J. Forbes	11/17	Randolph	30	D. Burton
Tufted Duck				11/18	Lakeville	131	G. d'Entremont#
11/14-11/24	Lakeville	1 m ph	J. Sweeney + v.o.	12/16	Agawam	90	J. Zepko
12/10	Nantucket	1 m ph	T. Pastuszak#	Common X Barrow's Goldeneye (hybrid)			
Greater Scaup				12/15-12/19	BHI (Deer I.)	1 ph	S. Zende# + v.o.
11/18	Lakeville	85	G. d'Entremont#	Barrow's Goldeneye			
11/18	Wachusett Res.	160	M. Lynch#	11/5-11/21	Southboro	1 m	B. Abbott + v.o.
11/22	Richmond	5	J. Pierce + v.o.	11/16-12/24	Randolph	2 m, f	J. Bock + v.o.
11/25	Acoaxet	108	M. Lynch#	11/18, 12/18	Cohasset	1 m	D. Burton + v.o.
12/12	Rockport (AP)	816	R. Heil	11/23-12/28	Dighton	1 m	J. Eckerson + v.o.
12/16	Nantucket	440	P. Trull	11/23-12/16	Sharon	1 m	E. Ganin + v.o.
Lesser Scaup				11/25-12/31	BHI (Deer I.)	1 m	J. Layman + v.o.
11/4	Quabbin (G41)	11	B. Zajda	11/29-12/2	Agawam	1	J. Weeks
11/8	Sudbury Res.	18	M. Lynch#	12/4-12/12	Fairhaven	1 m	C. Longworth
11/18	Lakeville	155	G. d'Entremont#	12/5	Turner's Falls	1	J. Smith
12/13	Gloucester (EP)	15	MAS (D. Moon)	12/12	Rockport (AP)	1 m ad	R. Heil
12/16	Randolph	8	G. d'Entremont#	Hooded Merganser			
King Eider				11/12	Hinsdale	48	M. Lynch#
thr	P'town (RP)	1 m ph	v.o.	11/18	Lakeville	73	G. d'Entremont#
11/5	Barnstable	1 f ph	P. Crosson	11/30	Groveland	80	J. MacDougall
11/19-12/31	Rockport (AP)	2 max m, f ph	R. Heil + v.o.	12/2	Quabog IBA	240	M. Lynch#
11/19-12/17	BHI (Deer I.)	1 f ph	J. Layman + v.o.	12/9	Waltham	250	J. Forbes
11/23-12/7	Gloucester (BR)	1 m ph	v.o.	Common Merganser			
12/2	Sandwich	1 m	S. Wheelock#	11/23	Holland	1886	M. Lynch#
12/10	Chatham	1 subad m ph	M. Iliff	11/25	Wakefield	350	B. Zajda
Common Eider				11/29	Quabog IBA	658	M. Lynch#
11/4	Eastham (FE)	1500	G. d'Entremont#	11/30	Wakefield	155	P. Peterson
12/17	Orleans	2575	P. Flood#	Red-breasted Merganser			
12/18	PI	830	R. Heil	11/5	PI	200	T. Wetmore + v.o.
12/31	Ipswich	250	J. Berry#	11/5	Quabbin Pk	2	B. Zajda
Harlequin Duck				11/25	Westport	81	M. Lynch#
thr	Rockport	35 max	v.o.	12/2	Somerville	12	J. Forbes
11/4-12/13	P'town	3 max	v.o.	12/10	P'town (RP)	730	B. Nikula
11/5-thr	Westport	15 max	J. Eckerson + v.o.	Ruddy Duck			
11/5	Nantucket	10	G. Andrews#	11/4	Quabbin (G35)	79	B. Zajda
11/5-12/18	Cohasset	4 2m, 2f	V. Zollo + v.o.	11/8	W. Newbury	260	P. + F. Vale
11/11	Chilmark	21	J. Young	11/14	Fall River	500	P. Champlin
11/17	Duxbury B.	4	R. Bowes	11/25	Cambr. (FP)	64	C. Cook
Surf Scoter				12/2	Holland	77	M. Lynch#
11/2	PI	233	S. Williams	12/11	Arlington	95	R. Stymeist
11/4	Eastham	1000	G. d'Entremont#	Northern Bobwhite			
11/7	Ipswich (CB)	21	J. Berry	11/4	Eastham (FH)	2	G. d'Entremont#
11/15	Pittsfield (Onota)	2	G. Hurley	11/8	Franklin	12	J. Waldron
White-winged Scoter				Ring-necked Pheasant			
11/4-11/12	Cambr. (FP)	1	P. + F. Vale# + v.o.	11/3	Quabbin (G35)	1 m	B. Lafley
11/5	PI	250	T. Wetmore	11/25	Athol	1 m	D. Wornham
11/6, 11/27	Turner's Falls	2, 4	J. Coleman + v.o.	12/12	Westport	1 m	S. Martin
11/8, 11/23	Pittsfield (Onota)	1, 3	G. Hurley	Ruffed Grouse			
11/9	Dennis	2500	P. Flood	12/8	Bourne	2	P. Trimble
11/25	Westport	136	M. Lynch#	12/30	Quabbin	2	M. Lynch#
Black Scoter				Wild Turkey			
11/2	PI	1387	S. Williams	11/12	Westport	31	G. d'Entremont
11/4	Eastham	750	G. d'Entremont#	12/10	Lincoln	45	P. + F. Vale
11/4	Jamaica Plain	40	S. Jones	12/19	Rutland	76	M. Lynch#
11/5	Quabbin Pk	25	B. Zajda	12/31	Ipswich	39	J. Berry#
11/11	Pittsfield (Onota)	14	Allen Club	Pied-billed Grebe			
11/18	Waltham	11	J. Forbes	11/2, 12/7	GMNWR	2, 1	A. Bragg#
Long-tailed Duck				11/2-11/7	PI	2	S. Williams + v.o.
11/2	Gill	26	J. Smith	11/4-11/29	Melrose	3 max	D. Jewell + v.o.
11/3	Pittsfield (Pont.)	3	T. Collins	11/11-11/30	Groveland	5 max	G. d'Entremont#
11/4	Wachusett Res.	46	M. Lynch#	11/18	Wareham	4	G. d'Entremont#
11/5, 12/18	PI	150, 220	T. Wetmore + v.o.	11/25	Acoaxet	3	M. Lynch#
Bufflehead				Horned Grebe			
11/1	PI	240	T. Wetmore	11/4	Quincy	10	P. Peterson
11/1	Turner's Falls	31	J. Smith	11/8	Waltham	3	M. Rines
11/13	Sterling	36	D. Grant	11/8	Westboro	4	M. Lynch#
11/18	Lakeville	189	G. d'Entremont#	11/18	Lakeville	29	G. d'Entremont#
11/25	Acoaxet	336	M. Lynch#	12/9	S. Quabbin	11	L. Therrien
11/28	Orleans	530	R. Heil	12/18	PI	13	R. Heil
12/31	Nantucket	1069	I. Davies#	Red-necked Grebe			
Common Goldeneye				thr	PI	10 max	M. Watson + v.o.
thr	PI	112 max	R. Heil + v.o.	11/3	Quabbin (G35)	2	B. Lafley

Red-necked Grebe (continued)					Killdeer			
11/8	Westboro	2	M. Lynch#	12/7	Dedham	1		D. Sullivan
11/15	Pittsfield (Onota)	2		12/9	Cumb. Farms	1		M. Iliff
12/3	P'town	8	B. Nikula	12/16	Orange	1		J. Rose
12/31	Nantucket	16	I. Davies#	12/16	Plymouth	1		A. Bartolo
Eared Grebe					12/19	Amherst	1	B. Laffley
12/2-12/5	P'town (RP)	1 ph	P. Flood#	12/19	Winthrop	1		B. Burke
Yellow-billed Cuckoo					12/24	Sterling	1	J. Lawson#
11/1	New Bedford	1	H. Zimmerlin	Whimbrel				
11/1	Turner's Falls	1	J. Rose	11/4, 11/17	Eastham (FE)	1,1	G.d'Entremont#, P.Trimble	
11/2	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Kaufman#	11/12-11/16	WBWS	1	N. Dorian, M. Faherty	
11/3	Waltham	1	J. Forbes	12/27	Chatham	1	F. Atwood	
11/3-11/5	WBWS	1	v.o.	Hudsonian Godwit				
11/4	PI	1	A. Gurka	11/5	Nantucket	1 ph	K. Blackshaw#	
11/5	Falmouth	1	G. Hirth	Ruddy Turnstone				
11/12	Chestnut Hill	1	M. Iliff	11/7	Westport	4	L. Waters	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird					11/8	Winthrop B.	15	T. Bradford#
11/12-12/14	Medford	1 ph	L. Eforo	11/12	Quincy	8	D. Burton	
Rufous Hummingbird					Red Knot			
11/17-12/4	Hingham	1 f b ph	v.o.	11/4	Nantucket	1	S. Kardell	
Clapper Rail					11/5, 12/3	Barnstable	23,1	P. Crosson
11/1	Fairhaven	1	C. Longworth	11/11	Orleans	2	M. + L. Waters	
12/17	Chatham	1	T. Spahr, S. Finnegan	Stilt Sandpiper				
12/30	Harwich	1	S. Williams	11/1-11/21	PI	1	T. Wetmore	
Virginia Rail					11/1-11/3	Quincy	1	V. Zollo + v.o.
11/2	GMNWR	2	A. Bragg#	Sanderling				
11/18	Northampton	1	D. Bates	thr	PI	150 max	D. Adrien + v.o.	
12/18-12/24	Berkley	2 max	au A. Eckerson + v.o.	11/9	Barnstable (SN)	1000	P. Crosson	
12/19	Wareham	1	N. Marchessault	11/10	Sheffield	1	G. Ward	
12/27-12/30	PI	1	J. Nealon + v.o.	11/25	Westport	210	M. Lynch#	
12/27	Plymouth	1	B. Griffith	Dunlin				
Sora					11/1	Bolton Flats	9	E. Kittredge
11/7	Eastham (FH)	1	M. Iliff#	11/5	Ashley Falls	4	G. Ward	
11/12	Cotuit	1	P. Trimble	11/8	PI	800 max	D. Adrien	
American Coot					11/9	Barnstable (SN)	1200	P. Crosson
11/4	Eastham	12	G. d'Entremont#	12/17	Ipswich (CB)	410	J. Berry#	
11/11	Richmond	28	Allen Club	Purple Sandpiper				
11/11	Groveland	27	G. d'Entremont#	11/1	PI	16	T. Wetmore	
11/25	Acoaxet	14	M. Lynch#	11/6, 12/11	Cohasset	13,16	D. Burton	
11/27	Jamaica Plain	15	P. Peterson	11/12	Westport	2	M. Sylvia	
11/30	GMNWR	52	A. Bragg#	11/26	Rockport (AP)	40	P. Van Demark	
12/19	Woburn (HP)	51	B. Lee#	White-rumped Sandpiper				
Sandhill Crane					11/5	P'town (RP)	9	J. Pratt
12/4	Tolland	4	D. Holmes	11/12	Pembroke	1	J. Young	
11/1	Uxbridge	4 ph	B. Robo	11/15	Quabog IBA	5	M. Lynch#	
11/5	Burrage Pd WMA	2 ph	E. Vacchino	11/18	Gloucester	1	S. Mirick	
11/8	Barre Falls	10	D. Schilling#	11/18-12/5	PI	4 max	P.+F.Vale+v.o.	
11/23-11/24	Pittsfield (Onota)	3 ph	G. Hurley	Pectoral Sandpiper				
12/3	P'town	5 ph	W. Hochachka	11/2	Hatfield	8	M. McKittrick	
12/29-12/30	Rehoboth	2 ph	D. Mozzoni + v.o.	11/4	Quincy	6	P. Peterson	
American Oystercatcher					11/4	Petersham	2	B. Laffley
11/3	Quincy	3	M. Iliff	11/5	Nantucket	25	K. Blackshaw#	
11/3	Scituate	1	K. Rawdon#	Semipalmated Sandpiper				
Black-bellied Plover					11/3	Yarmouth	1	P. Trimble
11/thr	PI	330 max	D. Adrien	11/8	Winthrop B.	1	T. Bradford#	
11/1	Bolton Flats	9	E. Kittredge	Semipalmated / Western Sandpiper				
11/3	GMNWR	9	P. Jay	12/27-12/28	Chatham	2 ph	F. Atwood#	
11/4	Quabbin (G35)	16	B. Zajda	Long-billed Dowitcher				
11/8	Winthrop B.	60	T. Bradford#	11/2-11/3	Quincy	1	K. Rawdon + v.o.	
11/9	Barnstable (SN)	300	P. Crosson	11/3	Hyannis	1	P. Trimble	
American Golden-Plover					11/3-11/12	WBWS	2	N. Dorian
11/1-11/9	Nantucket	2 max	K. Blackshaw#	American Woodcock				
11/2	Chatham	1 ad m	B. Nikula#	11/1	PI	1	T. Wetmore	
11/2	PI	1	T. Wetmore	11/12	Weymouth	2	V. Zollo	
11/4	Northampton	1	D. McLain	11/15	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	S. Jones	
Semipalmated Plover					11/20	New Braintree	1	B. Robo
11/2-11/23	PI	15 max	D.Chickering + v.o.	11/21	Dartmouth	3	C. Newton	
11/3	Quabbin (G35)	1	B. Laffley	Wilson's Snipe				
11/24-11/28	Westport	2 max	J. Forbes	11/1	Woburn (HP)	1	K. Marshall	
12/24	Duxbury B.	2	B. Vigorito	11/1	E. Boston (BI)	1	P. Peterson	
12/25, 12/30	Orleans	2,1	F. Atwood, B. Lagasse	11/12	Saugus	3	S. Zende#	
Piping Plover					12/12	Franklin	1	D. Allard
11/6-11/12	PI	1 ph, inj	D.Adrien + v.o.	12/15	Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney	

Lesser Yellowlegs				12/31	Nantucket	1	I. Davies#
11/2	Nbpt H.	6	Z. Pohlen	Little Gull			
11/4	Quabbin (G35)	2	B. Zajda	11/1	N. Truro	1	J. Pratt
12/20	Dartmouth	1	S. Martin	11/18	Westport	1 ph	O. DaRugna#
Willet (Western)				Laughing Gull			
11/1-11/21	Chatham	3 max	N. Villone# + v.o.	11/20	Westport	30	E. Lipton
Greater Yellowlegs				11/21	Dartmouth	3	J. Eckerson
11/4	Chatham	98	G. d'Entremont#	11/25	Acoaxet	2	M. Lynch#
11/5	Salisbury	17	S. Grinley	11/25	Scusset B.	1	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
11/9, 11/30	PI	22,1	T. Wetmore	12/14	Falmouth	1	P. Crosson
11/11	Newbury	45	P. + F. Vale	12/22	Wellfleet	1	J. Pratt
11/12	Quincy	8	D. Burton	12/27	W. Tisbury	1	S. Whiting#
12/4-12/20	Dartmouth	7	S. Martin	Iceland Gull			
12/29	MV	2	M. Iliff#	11/22	Gardner	2	T. Pirro
Red-necked Phalarope				11/26-12/16	Wilmington	6 max	S. Sullivan#
12/6	Mashpee	1 ph	B. Fiero	12/2, 12/26	Turner's Falls	1,1	E. Huston
Red Phalarope				12/3-12/17	Lunenburg	2 ad, imm	T. Pirro
12/8	Westport	1	M. Iliff	12/6	Tewksbury	5	D. Walters
Pomarine Jaeger				12/12	Rockport (AP)	1 ad	R. Heil
11/26, 12/16	P'town (RP)	4,2	P. Flood#	12/18	PI	1 ad	Kumlien's R. Heil
12/12	Rockport (AP)	7	R. Heil	12/19	Westboro	1 lcy	S. Williams
12/18	Stellwagen Bank	9	P. Flood#	12/25	BHI (Deer I.)	6	S. Jones
Parasitic Jaeger				12/27	P'town (RP)	26	S. Arena
11/2, 12/3	P'town (RP)	26,1	M. Harris + v.o.	12/31	Ipswich	1 ad	Kumlien's J. Berry#
11/15	Nantucket	3	L. Dunn	12/31	Nantucket	46	I. Davies#
Dovekie				Lesser Black-backed Gull			
12/3, 12/10	P'town (RP)	3,4	B. Nikula, L. Waters#	11/2-12/26	PI	1 ad	D. Adrien + v.o.
12/12	Rockport (AP)	36	R. Heil	11/4	P'town (RP)	3	S. Arena
12/18	Stellwagen Bank	138	P. Flood#	11/10	Southwick	1	D. Holmes
Common Murre				11/13	Westminster	1 ad	T. Pirro
12/12	Rockport (AP)	142	R. Heil	11/15-12/18	Turner's Falls	2 max	J. Smith + v.o.
12/18	Stellwagen Bank	32	P. Flood#	12/31	Nantucket	64	I. Davies#
12/24	P'town (RP)	104	S. Arena	Glaucous Gull			
Thick-billed Murre				11/3	Waltham	1	A. Gurka
12/12	Rockport (AP)	3	R. Heil	11/14	Gloucester	1 imm	MAS (D. Weaver)
12/24	P'town (RP)	2	L. Waters#	12/2	Wilmington	1	J. Keeley
Razorbill				Common Tern			
11/8, 12/27	P'town (RP)	220,2300	B. Nikula, S. Arena	11/4	Eastham	25	G. d'Entremont#
12/12	Rockport (AP)	338	R. Heil	11/4-12/4	P'town (RP)	500,1	B. Nikula
12/18	PI	75	R. Heil	11/25	Scusset B.	1 1W	SSBC (G. d'Entremont)
12/18	Cohasset	8	D. Burton	Forster's Tern			
Black Guillemot				11/4	Eastham	2	G. d'Entremont#
12/3	Cohasset	3	V. Zollo	11/9	Dennis	27	P. Flood
12/12	Rockport (AP)	2	R. Heil	11/19	P'town (RP)	10	N. Marchessault
12/24	P'town (RP)	1	B. Nikula#	11/23	Fairhaven	1	C. Longworth
12/28	MV	1	I. Davies#	Red-throated Loon			
12/28	PI	3	M. Daley#	11/1-11/12	PI	55,370	T. Wetmore
Atlantic Puffin				11/6	Cohasset	175	D. Burton
11/1	Orleans	1	C. Goodrich	12/11	Tolland	1	D. Holmes
12/3	Jeffrey's L.	1 ph	S. Mirick#	12/12	Rockport (AP)	262	R. Heil
12/12	Rockport (AP)	18	R. Heil	12/31	Nantucket	121	I. Davies#
12/18	Stellwagen Bank	19	P. Flood#	Pacific Loon			
Black-legged Kittiwake				12/24, 12/30	P'town (RP)	1,1 ph	P. Flood
12/3, 12/10	P'town (RP)	300,375	E. Ripma, B.	12/27	P'town (RP)	3 ph	S. Arena
Nikula#				Common Loon			
12/12	Rockport (AP)	276	R. Heil	11/5	PI	100	T. Wetmore
12/18	Stellwagen Bank	178	P. Flood#	11/5	Quabbin Pk	23	B. Zajda
12/31	Nantucket	311	I. Davies#	11/6	Cohasset	100	D. Burton
Bonaparte's Gull				Northern Fulmar			
11/1, 12/22	Quabbin Pk	1	L. Therrien	12/18	Stellwagen Bank	6	P. Flood#
11/2	Pittsfield (Pont.)	2	J. Pierce	12/31	Nantucket	13	H. Young#
11/4, 11/9	Turner's Falls	1	P. Gagarin, J. Rose	Cory's Shearwater			
11/4	Quabbin (G35)	1	B. Zajda	11/1, 11/15	P'town (RP)	600,3	B. Nikula
11/5	Ipswich	155	R. Heil	11/4, 11/5	Cohasset	1,2	D. Burton, V. Zollo
11/9	Quabog IBA	1 adW	M. Lynch#	11/5	Manomet	2	L. Waters
11/18	Nantucket	600	L. Dunn	11/14	Barnstable (SN)	2	P. Crosson
11/29, 12/18	PI	200,4	T. Wetmore + v.o.	11/17	Eastham (FE)	30	B. Nikula
12/12	Rockport (AP)	435	R. Heil	Sooty Shearwater			
Black-headed Gull				11/4	Eastham	5	G. d'Entremont#
11/1	Orleans	1 ad W	C. Goodrich	11/10, 12/10	P'town (RP)	11,1	S. Arena, B. Nikula#
11/7	P'town (RP)	1 ad W ph	M. Iliff#	11/11	Orleans	1	B. Nikula
11/18-11/21	Dartmouth	1 ad W ph	A. Kneide+ v.o.	Great Shearwater			
12/3, 12/16	Falmouth	1,1 1W ph	B. Fiero, S. Williams#	11/6	Cohasset	2	D. Burton

Great Shearwater (continued)				Brown Pelican			
11/8, 12/25	P'town (RP)	1100,1	B. Nikula + v.o.	11/7	Nahant	1 imm	L. Pivacek
12/6	Hull	1	D. Burton	11/9, 11/14	Barnstable (SN)	1 imm ph	P. Crosson#
12/10	N. Truro	8	B. Nikula	American Bittern			
12/12	Rockport (AP)	2	R. Heil	11/16-12/2	PI	1 D.	Chickering + v.o.
Manx Shearwater				Great Blue Heron			
11/4	Eastham	25	G. d'Entremont#	11/4	Eastham (FH)	15	G. d'Entremont#
11/10, 12/10	P'town (RP)	50,12	S. Arena, B. Nikula#	11/4	Quincy	10	P. Peterson
Northern Gannet				11/5	Saugus	17	S. Zende#
11/8	P'town (RP)	2200	B. Nikula	Great Egret			
11/17	Eastham (FE)	2500	B. Nikula	11/7	PI	9	D. Chickering
12/12	Rockport (AP)	262	R. Heil	11/18, 12/23	S. Dart. (APd)	23,8	P. Champlin + v.o.
Double-crested Cormorant				12/6	Nantucket	3	T. Pastuszak#
11/1, 12/11	PI	1500,2	T. Wetmore	12/22	Chatham	1	F. Atwood
11/4	Wachusett Res.	17	M. Lynch#	Snowy Egret			
11/25	Westport	10	M. Lynch#	11/23-11/25	W. Dennis	1	J. Sherwonit
11/26	Wakefield	8	J. Berry#	Cattle Egret			
Great Cormorant				11/1-11/5	Gill	1	v.o.
11/4	Aquinnah	38	B. Winn	11/5	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw#
11/8	Turner's Falls	2	J. Smith	11/22	Wakefield	1	L. Schibley
11/25	Acoaxet	12	M. Lynch#	11/24	Saugus	1	DCR (T. Trainor)
12/11	Cohasset	11	D. Burton	Black-crowned Night-Heron			
American White Pelican				12/2	Eastham (FH)	2	M. Baumann#
11/18	DWWS	1 !	K. Rawdon#	12/29	Vineyard Haven	11	L. Johnson#

VULTURES THROUGH DICKCISSEL

A few dedicated hawk watchers continued to monitor migration long after the peak of the Broad-winged Hawk flight. At Mount Wachusett, during a five-day stretch from November 4–8, 69 Turkey Vultures and 66 Red-tailed Hawks were tallied. At Blueberry Hill in Granville, two juvenile **Golden Eagles** and 15 Red-shouldered Hawks were counted on November 6. Other Golden Eagles were noted from the Barre Falls hawk watch, Groton, Groveland as well as a bird photographed in Salisbury. A high count of 15 Black Vultures was observed in Blackstone on the Rhode Island border. It was a good year for Rough-legged Hawks with reports from 14 locations compared to five areas during the same period last year.

This winter is a good one for Snowy Owls. By mid-November Snowys were showing up all along our coastline. The last major irruption was four years ago during the winter of 2013–14. Four years is the typical cycle between Snowy Owl irruptions, which coincides with the peak of lemming numbers, their preferred food source. During those years when lemmings are plentiful Snowy Owls will breed and raise young. There were reports this period from 14 locations, with a single day high of 16 individuals at Plum Island on December 18. The Greater Boston CBC found 12 birds, with eight of them at Logan Airport. Two Snowys at Drumlin Farm, Lincoln, were the only inland reports. In mid-December a **Barn Owl** was found roosting in a garage in Lexington. Barn Owls are unusual away from Martha's Vineyard or Nantucket. Long-eared Owls were reported from six locations with multiple birds in Essex and Lexington.

November in Massachusetts can be very exciting and this November was just that! Strong winds from the south at the end of October caused a sort of reverse migration redirecting migrants to the Northeast. This was especially notable on Cape Cod with many reports of vireos and warblers that should have been long gone from our area. Many of these were still being seen up until the snowstorm and frigid weather that arrived on December 9. White-eyed Vireos were reported from 19 locations totaling at least 28 individuals. (During the same period last year there were only two individuals.) Twenty-five species of wood warblers were noted during the period. Exceptionally late dates included a Blue-winged Warbler on December 9, a Hooded Warbler on December 13, a Cape May Warbler on December 14, and a Magnolia Warbler on December 11. Other unusually late reports included a Blue-headed Vireo in Bourne on December 19, and a Wood Thrush in Chatham on December 17.

Vagrants are another November specialty. Many of these are young birds lost on their

Great Horned Owl (continued)				Eastern Phoebe			
12/29	Lexington	2	R. Rotberg	11/27, 11/29	PI	1	P. + F. Vale + v.o.
Snowy Owl				12/7-12/23	Barnstable	1	J. Sweeney#
thr	P'town (RP)	4 max	v.o.	12/12-12/31	Dartmouth	1	B. King
11/11-11/30	Duxbury B.	3 max	R. Bowes + v.o.	12/29	W. Tisbury	1	M. Iliff#
11/13	Eastham (FE)	1	S. Finnegan#	12/30	Lakeville	1	M. Faherty
11/21	DFWS	2	MAS (P. Sowizral)	Ash-throated Flycatcher			
11/29	Fairhaven	2	C. Longworth	11/26-12/2	DFWS	1	ph P. Sowizral + v.o.
12/3	Barnstable (SN)	3	P. Crosson#	11/27-12/3	N. Truro	1	ph J. Pratt#
12/17	Orleans	5	P. Flood#	12/8	Hingham	1	ph ! S. Avery
12/17	Ipswich (CB)	2	J. Berry#	12/11	Wareham	1	ph N. Marchessault
12/17	Boston (Logan)	8	N. Smith	Northern Shrike			
12/18-12/26	W. Dennis	2	D. Meyer#	11/1	Montague	1	E. Huston, J. Rose
12/18	PI	16	R. Heil	11/4	Quabbin (G35)	1	ad B. Zajda
12/19	Nahant	2	L. Privacek	11/21	Southwick	1	M. Voelker
12/24	Chatham	2	F. Atwood	11/25	Turner's Falls	1	J. Smith
12/31	Nantucket	5	H. Young#	12/24	Amherst	1	S. Surner
Barred Owl				White-eyed Vireo			
11/25	Woburn	2	M. Rines	11/1-11/8	Turner's Falls	1	J. Smith
11/30	Wayland	2	A. McCarthy#	11/2-11/17	Nantucket	1	R. Ouren + v.o.
12/14	W. Brookfield	3	M. Lynch#	11/4, 12/7	Chatham	1,1	P. Trimble, R. Schain
12/17-12/23	Barnstable	1	E. Hill-Gest	11/4	Nahant	1	imm L. Ferraresso
Long-eared Owl				11/4	Rockport (HPt)	1	S. Sullivan#
11/7	Amherst	1	C. Russell	11/5-11/7	MNWS	1	J. Smith + v.o.
11/23	Quabbin (G35)	1	B. Zajda	11/7	Truro	1	J. Trimble#
12/21	Essex	4	J. Berry#	11/9-12/10	Dartmouth	1-3	E. Lipton#
12/23	Barnstable	1	J. Trimble#	11/9-12/9	PI	1-2	v.o.
12/30	PI	1	ph M. Culpepper#	11/11	Aquinnah	1	J. Young
12/30-12/31	Lexington (DM)	4	J. Young + v.o.	11/12	Eastham	3	S. Williams#
Short-eared Owl				11/12-11/13	Northampton	1	B. Lawson#
11/5, 12/24	Saugus	4,3	S. Zende#	11/12	MtA	1	K. Sayn-Wittgenstein
11/10, 11/23	Northampton	1	T. Buhl, L. Therrien	11/18-11/25	Rockport	1	S. Williams + v.o.
11/11	Orleans	2	B. Nikula#	11/21-12/17	Orleans	1-3	v.o.
11/14	Cumb. Farms	3	C. Floyd	11/21	Sandwich	1	P. Crosson
12/15	PI	4	P. Roberts#	12/2, 12/6	Falmouth	1	S. Williams, P. Trimble
Northern Saw-whet Owl				12/2	E. Gloucester	1	L. Waters#
11/28	Gill	3	J. Smith	12/3	Plymouth	1	M. Iliff
12/14	W. Brookfield	2	M. Lynch#	12/22	Hyannis	1	S. Matheny
12/30	Quabbin	3	M. Lynch#	Bell's Vireo			
Belted Kingfisher				11/28-12/13	Fairhaven	1	ph J. Sweeney + v.o.
11/4	Wachusett Res.	3	M. Lynch#	Yellow-throated Vireo			
11/18	Wareham	2	G. d'Entremont#	11/1	N. Dighton	1	ph J. Eckerson
Red-headed Woodpecker				11/23	Wellfleet	1	ph L. Waters#
11/25-12/31	Northampton	1	juv ph E. Labato + v.o.	12/2	Woods Hole	1	ph S. Williams#
12/11	Quabog IBA	1	ad M. Lynch#	Blue-headed Vireo			
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker				11/5, 12/16	Nantucket	1,1	B. Harris#
12/2	Westport	2	E. Nielsen	11/30	Plymouth	1	A. Bartolo
12/15	MtA	2	J. Trimble	12/19	Bourne	1	D. Clapp#
12/17	Orleans	4	M. Faherty#	Red-eyed Vireo			
12/30	Warren	2	D. Evans	11/1	Brewster	3	b S. Finnegan
Pileated Woodpecker				11/2-11/8	PI	3	max Z. Pohlen, D. Adrien
11/24	Hamilton	2	J. Berry#	11/4, 11/18	Rockport	1,1	J. Trimble, S. Williams
11/24	Royalston	2	M. Lynch#	11/8	Medford	1	imm R. LaFontaine
12/3-12/4	Lincoln	2	P. Peterson	11/12	Rockport (HPt)	1	S. Sullivan#
12/30	Quabbin	5	M. Lynch#	11/17	Westport	2	S. Williams#
American Kestrel				Fish Crow			
12/3	Saugus	2	S. Zende#	11/18	Wareham	8	G. d'Entremont#
Merlin				11/23	PI	1	J. Nathan
12/18	PI	2	R. Heil	12/17	Worcester	2	M. Lynch#
Peregrine Falcon				Common Raven			
11/1	E. Boston (BI)	3	P. Peterson	11/7	Mt Wachusett	11	R. Chase#
11/3	Westport	2	A. Eckerson	11/26	P'town (RP)	4	P. Flood#
11/10, 12/19	Winthrop	2	M. Iliff, B. Burke	12/26	Wachusett Res.	5	M. Lynch#
11/10	Revere	1	pr DCR (S. Riley)	Horned Lark			
11/26	Jamaica Plain	2	S. Walker	11/11	Acton	100	G. d'Entremont#
12/2, 12/18	PI	4,3	S. Harvell, T. Wetmore	11/25	Northampton	300	D. Allard
12/24	Saugus	2	S. Zende#	11/26	Rutland	70	M. Lynch#
Least Flycatcher				12/24	Saugus	100	S. Zende#
11/18-11/30	S. Dart. (APd)	1	au P. Champlin + v.o.	Tree Swallow			
Hammond's Flycatcher				11/1, 11/12	P'town (RP)	1500,400	B. Nikula#
11/11	Concord	1	ph J. Forbes#	12/9	Chatham	7	J. Trimble#
11/29-12/3	Medford	1	ph au N. Dorian + v.o.	12/19	Nantucket	2	L. Dunn

Tree Swallow (continued)				11/28	Orleans	17		R. Heil
12/24	Westport	1	P. Champlin	12/4-12/27	PI	3		T. Wetmore
12/29	Tisbury	5	O. Houghton		Brown Thrasher			
Northern Rough-winged Swallow				11/16, 12/26	PI	1,2	T. Wetmore, M. Kennedy	
11/1	Sudbury	1	B. Harris	12/2	S. Dart. (APd)	3		P. Champlin
12/3	Woods Hole	1	M. Iliff	12/27	Fairhaven	1		M. Sylvia
Cave Swallow					Cedar Waxwing			
11/6	Manomet	1 ph	A. Kneidel	11/6	Quabog IBA	70		M. Lynch#
11/18	Westport	2	A. Boyce	12/3	Manomet	180		S. Williams
Barn Swallow					American Pipit			
11/6	Manomet	4	A. Kneidel	11/14	Peabody	78		D. Williams
11/12	Westport	1	P. Champlin	12/3	Fairhaven	50		G. d'Entremont#
11/20	Yarmouth	2	P. Crosson	12/3, 12/24	Saugus	36,2		S. Zende#
Red-breasted Nuthatch				12/9	Cumb. Farms	38		M. Iliff
11/26	Holland	8	B. Zajda		Evening Grosbeak			
12/3	Winchendon	25	M. Lynch#	11/5, 12/5	Royalston	5,6	E. LeBlanc, D. Furbish#	
12/18	PI	3	R. Heil		Purple Finch			
12/30	Quabbin	16	M. Lynch#	11/4	Medford	1		M. Rines#
Brown Creeper				11/12	PI	4		N. Landry
11/7	Natick	2	D. Burton	11/26	Salisbury	3		D. Burton
11/9	GMNWR	6	A. Bragg#		Common Redpoll			
11/20	S. Dart. (APd)	2	C. Cook	11/26	Salisbury	1		D. Burton
12/21	Mt Wataatic	4	T. Spahr		Red Crossbill			
House Wren				11/5	Salisbury	1		S. Grinley
12/6-12/15	Cambridge	1	R. Stymeist	11/7	Dunstable	2 au		C. Sheridan
12/9	Cumb. Farms	1	M. Iliff	11/23	Millbury	1		D. Berard#
12/11	Plymouth	1	M. Faherty	12/8	Savoy	6		T. Spahr
12/16	Mashpee	1	J. Trimble	12/21	Mt Wataatic 7 Type 3+10			T. Spahr
12/23	Osterville	1	I. Davies#	12/31	Newton	1		H. Miller
Winter Wren					White-winged Crossbill			
11/8	Medford	3	R. LaFontaine	12/15	Leicester	1		N. Paulson
12/2	S. Dart. (APd)	3	P. Champlin	12/15	Mt Wataatic	16		T. Spahr
12/2	Westport	3	E. Nielsen		Pine Siskin			
12/3	Winchendon	5	M. Lynch#	11/4	Quabbin (G35)	4		B. Zajda
12/28	Sheffield	3	J. Pierce	11/18	Palmer	12		B. Zajda
Marsh Wren				11/18	Belmont	1		MAS (J. Layman)
12/5	W. Roxbury (MP)	1 au	M. Iliff	12/10	Savoy	8		T. Spahr
12/14, 12/28	GMNWR	4,1	A. Bragg#		Lapland Longspur			
12/19	Wareham	3	N. Marchessault	11/2	Gill	1		J. Smith
12/27	Plymouth	2	B. Griffith	11/12, 12/30	PI	25,5		T. Wetmore
Carolina Wren				11/12	Weymouth	1		V. Zollo
11/28	Orleans	30	R. Heil	11/19	Saugus	1		S. Zende#
12/16	Braintree	10	G. d'Entremont#	11/20-12/13	Northampton	1		L. Therrien + v.o.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher					Snow Bunting			
11/4	Rockport (HPT)	1	J. Keeley#	11/11	Salisbury	87		P. + F. Vale
11/9	Rockport (AP)	1	P. + F. Vale	11/15	New Salem	60		B. Lafley
12/1-12/3	Manomet	2	J. Barrett + v.o.	12/16	PI	60		T. Wetmore
12/2	Falmouth	1	S. Williams#	12/30	P'town (RP)	90		B. Nikula#
Golden-crowned Kinglet				12/31	Nantucket	120		H. Young#
11/24	Hamilton	13	J. Berry#		Eastern Towhee			
11/26	Holland	16	B. Zajda	12/3-12/29	N. Reading	1 f		J. Keeley + v.o.
12/30	Quabbin	24	M. Lynch#	12/11	Concord	1		B. Olson
Ruby-crowned Kinglet				12/18-12/20	Dartmouth	1		B. King + v.o.
11/3	Stoneham	6	D. Jewell	12/30	Lincoln	1		N. Levey
12/2	Falmouth	6	S. Williams#		American Tree Sparrow			
12/2	S. Dart. (APd)	7	P. Champlin	11/7, 11/21	PI	1,11		T. Wetmore
Eastern Bluebird				12/6	Hadley	33		M. Lynch#
11/5	Ipswich	13	R. Heil	12/14	PI	50		T. Wetmore#
11/26	Holland	18	B. Zajda	12/30	N. Marshfield	45		G. d'Entremont#
12/3	Winchendon	19	M. Lynch#		Chipping Sparrow			
12/7	GMNWR	17	A. Bragg#	11/10	Belchertown	5		M. McKittrick
Townsend's Solitaire				11/12, 11/25	Dover	3,2		E. Nielsen
11/12-12/3	Dartmouth	1 ph	G. d'Entremont + v.o.	11/24, 12/3	PI	2,1		A. Bean
Swainson's Thrush				11/25	MtA	4		C. Cook
11/5	Ipswich	1	R. Heil	12/23	Berlin	3 ad		J. Gahagan
Hermit Thrush					Clay-colored Sparrow			
11/4	Belmont	6	R. Jilek	thr	Reports of indiv. from 13 locations			
12/2	Westport	9	E. Nielsen		Field Sparrow			
12/7, 12/27	PI	7,7	T. Wetmore	12/1	Truro	4		R. Stymeist
Wood Thrush				12/20	Lancaster	3		A. Bairstow
12/17	Chatham	1	B. Nikula#	12/27	Plymouth	9		B. Griffith
Gray Catbird					Lark Sparrow			
11/21	S. Dart. (APd)	8	J. Eckerson#	11/6-11/7	Cambridge	1 ph		G. Hantsbarger + v.o.

Savannah Sparrow				12/30	Stow	8	O. Moss
11/3, 12/4	PI	12,1	P. + F. Vale + v.o.	12/31	Vineyard Haven	2	L. Johnson#
11/14	Concord	4	D. Williams	Ovenbird			
Ipswich Sparrow				11/5	Nantucket	1	B. Harris#
11/11	Orleans	5	L. Waters#	12/6	Chatham	1	R. Schain#
11/12, 11/24	Westport	3,1	M. Sylvia, P. Champlin	12/23	Barnstable	1	J. Trimble#
12/17	Ipswich (CB)	6	J. Berry#	12/29	Tisbury	1	O. Houghton
Grasshopper Sparrow				Northern Waterthrush			
11/3	Burrage Pd WMA	1 ph	J. Sweeney	11/2	Cambr. (FP)	1 ph	J. Trimble
11/21	Orleans	1	S. Williams#	11/11, 11/30	Orleans	1	B. Nikula#
12/14	Brookfield	1	Sturbridge CBC (B. Robo#)	12/17	S. Dartmouth	1	J. Young
12/17-12/20	Melrose	1 ph	Greater Boston CBC	Blue-winged Warbler			
12/31	Nantucket	1	S. Williams#	11/3	Westport	1 ph	E. Lipton#
Nelson's Sparrow				11/28-12/9	Orleans	1	R. Heil, J. Trimble#
11/2-11/4	E. Boston (BI)	1 ph	T. Bradford + v.o.	Black-and-white Warbler			
Saltmarsh Sparrow				11/4	Gloucester (EP)	1 ph	D. + T. Swain
11/4	MNWS	1 ph	A. Sanford	Tennessee Warbler			
Seaside Sparrow				11/5	Ipswich	1	R. Heil
11/27-12/2	Eastham (FH)	1	A. Belford + v.o.	11/28	Orleans	1	R. Heil
Fox Sparrow				11/29	PI	1 ph	S. Sullivan
11/16	Quincy	5	P. Peterson	Orange-crowned Warbler			
12/2	S. Dart. (APd)	8	P. Champlin	thr	Reports of indiv. from 39 locations		
12/5	IRWS	4	J. Nelson	11/2, 11/28	PI	3,3	S. Williams, T. Wetmore
12/17	Nantucket	4	T. Pastuszak#	11/7-11/24	Westport	3	max L. Waters, P. Champlin
Lincoln's Sparrow				11/28	Orleans	3	R. Heil
11/11	Groton	2	T. Murray	Nashville Warbler			
12/8, 12/27	Manomet	1	L. Schibley, M. Faherty	11/3	Burrage Pd WMA	1	J. Sweeney
12/15	Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney	11/24	Barnstable	1	P. Crosson
12/16	Weymouth	1	J. Bock	11/24	Westport	1	P. Champlin
Swamp Sparrow				11/25	Nahant	1	S. Williams
11/3, 12/18	PI	2	P. + F. Vale, R. Heil	12/6	Chestnut Hill	1	P. Peterson
11/9, 12/28	GMNWR	16,1	A. Bragg#	12/18	Quincy	1	M. Garvey
12/27	Plymouth	3	B. Griffith	MacGillivray's Warbler			
12/31	Ipswich	2	J. Berry#	11/12-11/17	Hadley (Honeypot)	1 ph	T. Gilliland
White-crowned Sparrow				Common Yellowthroat			
12/9	Cumb. Farms	7	M. Iliif	11/18	S. Dart. (APd)	2	P. Champlin
12/17	Douglas	4	M. Lynch#	12/1	PI	1 f	N. Dubrow
Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)				12/3	Fairhaven	1 m	E. Lipton
12/2	PI	1 ph	T. Gilliland	Hooded Warbler			
Yellow-breasted Chat				11/7	PI	1 f imm	P. Donahue#
11/1	Quincy	1	J. Young#	12/3-12/13	Chestnut Hill	1 ph	H. Mazerall + v.o.
11/12	Nahant	2	J. McCoy	American Redstart			
11/17, 12/2	Westport	4,1	S. Williams#, E. Nielsen	11/5	Nantucket	1	B. Harris#
11/18-11/21	S. Dart. (APd)	1	P. Champlin + v.o.	11/11	Orleans	1	M. Waters#
12/1	Orleans	1	R. Stymeister	11/11-11/12	S. Dart. (APd)	1	J. Offermann + v.o.
12/1	Wellfleet	1	R. Stymeister	Cape May Warbler			
12/3	Manomet	1	S. Williams	11/10	Scituate	1 m	J. Young
12/7-12/21	Waltham	1	J. Forbes + v.o.	11/15	P'town (RP)	1	S. Finnegan#
12/11	Saugus	1	G. Wilson	11/29, 12/3	PI	1	S. Sullivan, T. Gilliland
12/27	Fairhaven	1	M. Sylvia	12/3	W. Newbury	1 imm m	D. Peacock
Eastern Meadowlark				12/7	Chatham	1	P. Trimble
11/4	Eastham (FH)	9	G. d'Entremont#	12/14	Wellesley	1	M. Salett#
11/7	Westport	10	J. Hoye#	Northern Parula			
11/18, 12/22	S. Dart. (APd)	40,8	P. Champlin	thr-12/3	Reports of indiv. from 10 locations		
12/22	DWWS	11	S. Avery#	11/12, 11/30	S. Dart. (APd)	2,1	E. Lipton, J. Eckerson
Western Meadowlark*				Magnolia Warbler			
11/21-11/23	PI	1 ph	S. Sullivan + v.o.	11/10	Scituate	1 m	J. Young
Baltimore Oriole				12/11	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak#
thr	Reports of indiv. from 12 locations			Chestnut-sided Warbler			
11/4	Belmont	2	R. Jilek	12/3	Medford	1 ph	A. Brandt
12/2	Falmouth	2	S. Williams#	Blackpoll Warbler			
12/16	Rockport	2	R. Diebboll	11/2	PI	1	S. Williams
12/17	Orleans	3	J. Trimble#	11/21	Plymouth	1 ph	B. Griffith
Red-winged Blackbird				Black-throated Blue Warbler			
12/19	Wareham	25	N. Marchessault	11/3	Dartmouth	1 f	B. King
12/21	Lynnfield	30	L. Ireland	Palm Warbler			
12/30	Wayland	69	B. Harris	11/7	Westport	2 western	L. Waters
12/31	Ipswich	7	J. Berry#	12/9	PI	1	N. Landry
Rusty Blackbird				12/17	Northampton	4	v.o.
11/11	Boxborough	25	A. Sgroi#	Pine Warbler			
11/11	Worcester	25	E. Kittredge	11/24	Hamilton	6	J. Berry#
12/14-12/29	Wayland	30 max	A. McCarthy#	11/26	Westport	3	P. Champlin
12/24	Lynnfield	42	J. Dillon	12/11-12/14	Plymouth	2	L. Meeks + v.o.

Yellow-rumped Warbler				Summer Tanager			
11/2	PI	52	S. Williams, T. Wetmore	11/1	N. Truro	1	ph J. Pratt
11/7, 11/12	Westport	75,42	L. Waters, M. Sylvia	11/12, 12/10	E. Harwich	1	ph D. Gray + v.o.
11/12, 11/20	Dartmouth	20,20	G. d'Entremont, C. Cook	11/15-11/23	Scusset B.	1	ph N. Villone#
11/30	Orleans	120	S. Williams	12/4-12/28	Nantucket	1	ph T. Pastuszak#
12/3	Manomet	18	S. Williams	12/7-12/13	Wellfleet	1	ph D. O'Connell#
Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's)				12/8-12/31	Plymouth	1	ph L. Meeks + v.o.
11/7-11/8	Somerset	1	ph J. Sweeney + v.o.	12/9-12/19	S. Dartmouth	1	ph A. Morgan + v.o.
11/15	P'town (RP)	1	ph S. Finnegan#	Scarlet Tanager			
11/28	Orleans	1	ph P. Trimble	11/4	Rockport	1	ph T. Spahr#
Yellow-throated Warbler				11/4	Nantucket	1	B. Harris#
11/5	Nantucket	1	ph B. Harris#	Western Tanager			
11/9-11/11	Orleans	1	ph C. O'Connor + v.o.	12/11-12/15	Westwood	1	ph E. Nielsen
11/12	Nahant	1	m ph L. Pivacek	12/16-12/30	Haverhill	1	ph N. Dubrow + v.o.
11/26	Westport	1	ph P. Champlin#	12/27	Brewster	1	ph M. Leonard
12/2-12/19	Salisbury	1	ph J. Mirick + v.o.	Rose-breasted Grosbeak			
12/17	Orleans	1	J. Trimble	11/3-11/16	Nantucket	1	S. Kardell
Prairie Warbler				11/4-11/12	S. Dart. (APd)	1	E. Lipton + v.o.
11/3-11/4	Westboro	1	ph T. Spahr + v.o.	11/16-12/7	WBWS	1	M. Faherty#
12/9	Chatham	1	J. Trimble#	12/22	Woods Hole	1	L. McCartin
Black-throated Gray Warbler				Indigo Bunting			
11/20-12/6	Wakefield	1	ph B. Lee, D. Williams + v.o.	11/1	Harwich	3	J. Sweeney
Black-throated Green Warbler				11/4, 11/12	Rockport	5,2	T. Spahr, S. Sullivan#
11/2	N. Dighton	1	ph J. Eckerson	12/15	Marshfield	1	C. Whitebread#
11/3	Pittsfield (Pont.)	1	ph J. Pierce	12/31	Nantucket	1	S. Williams#
Wilson's Warbler				Painted Bunting			
12/2	Westport	1	E. Nielsen	12/12-12/22	Massheepe	1	m ph K. Whitney#
12/3	Truro	1	M. Iliff	Dickcissel			
12/3-12/7	Brookline	1	M. Kaufman + v.o.	11/4	Eastham (FH)	1	G. d'Entremont#
12/3	Plymouth	1	m ph M. Iliff	12/15	Cumb. Farms	1	J. Sweeney
12/5-12/17	Brighton	1	ph R. Stymeist	12/16-12/30	Nantucket	1	S. Kardell
				12/23	Woburn	1	M. Rines

BYGONE BIRDS

Historical Highlights for November–December

Neil Hayward

5 YEARS AGO

November–December 2012

Up to four **Western Grebes** sat off Plum Island from the end of November through December. The state hosted two **Allen's Hummingbirds**, one continuing in Great Barrington and another on Martha's Vineyard. Two **Northern Lapwings** were found in Plymouth County in mid-November; the two individuals continuing on Nantucket brought the period count to an amazing four birds. A **Black-capped Petrel** was seen from Andrew's Point on December 21. A **Little Egret** spent over a month on Cape Cod. The passerine highlight was a **Mountain Bluebird** at Good Harbor Beach. The winter finch invasion was historic: Plum Island alone hosted 180 White-winged Crossbills, 180 Common and one Hoary Redpoll, and 30 Red Crossbills. Large flocks of Pine and Evening Grosbeaks roamed the state.

Best sighting: **Black-browed Albatross**, off Martha's Vineyard, December 2. Third state record and first photographed. Seen feeding within 20 feet of a boat, only four miles into Massachusetts waters (from Rhode Island).



10 YEARS AGO

November–December 2007



A **Western Grebe** was at Plum Island November 25–28. Western hummingbirds were abundant: four **Rufous Hummingbirds** were banded and a **Black-chinned Hummingbird** on Nantucket was the state's fourth. East Orleans hosted the state's latest **American Avocet** on December 14. A **Gray Jay** spent most of November on Mount Watatic. The winter will be remembered by many for the unprecedented invasion of **Bohemian Waxwings**; the Cape Cod Christmas Bird Count (CBC) tallied a record 983. The winter was also exceptional for **Pine Grosbeaks**, with flocks of up to 100 reported from 20 locations, and at least 11 **Hoary Redpolls**.

Best sighting: **Slaty-backed Gull**, Gloucester, December 23. Two individuals, found on the same day, constituted the first and second state records.

20 YEARS AGO

November–December 1997



A **Bar-tailed Godwit** at Plymouth on December 29–31 remains the only state record for that month. A Roseate Tern at Indian Lake, Worcester, on November 2–3 was the first inland record and the latest for the state, until one (the same bird?) appeared two weeks later on the Vineyard. A **Sedge Wren** appeared at Eastern Point, Gloucester, on November 28 and stayed long enough to participate in the CBC. Six "Oregon" Juncos were seen throughout the period.

Best sighting: **Hermit Warbler**, Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, December 21. This is the third confirmed record for Massachusetts. The bird stayed until the following March and was seen by many.

40 YEARS AGO

November–December 1977



Waterfowl put up some impressive numbers this winter: six "**Whistling**" (**Tundra**) **Swans** on Martha's Vineyard on December 17; 1,200 Canvasback at Assonet on December 11; 184 Redheads on Nantucket on November 26, and a raft of 8,000 Red-breasted Mergansers at Truro. Ten **Fulvous Whistling-Ducks** arrived at Plum Island on November 6, with one bird staying until November 25. Ten unidentified (but presumably Great) **Skuas** were present at Georges Bank throughout November. Up to ten **Boreal Chickadees** were visiting three locations in November. During the same month, there was a mild invasion of **Varied Thrushes** with five birds scattered throughout the state. A **Black-throated Gray Warbler** continued in Salem until November 23, and a **Harris's Sparrow**, found in Belmont on December 12, stayed two weeks.

Best sighting: **MacGillivray's Warbler**, Dunback Meadow, November 13–30. This represents the first state record. 🐦

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOS checklist, 7th edition, 58th Supplement, as published in *Auk* 2017, vol. 134(3):751-773 (see <<http://checklist.aou.org/>>).

Locations		Pk	Park
AA	Arnold Arboretum, Boston	Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro
ABC	Allen Bird Club	POP	Point of Pines, Revere
AP	Andrews Point, Rockport	PR	Pinnacle Rock, Malden
APd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth	P'town	Provincetown
B	Beach	R.	River
Barre FD	Barre Falls Dam	Res.	Reservoir
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	RKG	Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston
BHI	Boston Harbor Islands	RP	Race Point, Provincetown
BI	Belle Isle, E. Boston	SB	South Beach, Chatham
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester	SN	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
BNC	Boston Nature Center, Mattapan	SP	State Park
BR	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
BRI Co. seas	Bristol County, offshore	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
Cambr.	Cambridge	TASL	Take A Second Look, Boston Harbor Census
CB	Crane Beach, Ipswich	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	WE	World's End, Hingham
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	WMA	Wildlife Management Area
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis	WMWS	Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary
CP	Crooked Pond, Boxford	Wompatuck SP	Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, Norwell
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms, Middleboro	Worc.	Worcester
DFWS	Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary	WSF	Willowdale State Forest, Ipswich
DM	Dunback Meadow		
DWMA	Delaney WMA, Stow, Bolton, Harvard	Other Abbreviations	
DWWS	Daniel Webster Wildlife Sanctuary	*	first state record (pending MARC review)
EP	Eastern Point, Gloucester	!	subject to MARC review
FE	First Encounter Beach, Eastham	ad	adult
FH	Fort Hill, Eastham	au	heard / recorded
FP	Fresh Pond, Cambridge	b	banded
FPk	Franklin Park, Boston	br	breeding
G#	Gate #, Quabbin Res.	cy	cycle (3cy = 3rd cycle)
GMNWR	Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge	d	dead
H.	Harbor	dk	dark (morph)
HP	Horn Pond, Woburn	f	female
HPt	Halibut Point, Rockport	fl	fledgling
HRWMA	High Ridge WMA, Gardner	imm	immature
I.	Island	inj	injured
IBA	Important Bird Area	juv	juvenile
IRWS	Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary	lt	light (morph)
L.	Ledge	m	male
MAS	Mass Audubon	MARC	Massachusetts Avian Records Committee
MBO	Bird Observatory, Manomet	max	maximum
MBWMA	Martin Burns WMA, Newbury	migr	migrating
MI	Morris Island	n	nesting
MNWS	Marblehead Neck Wildlife Sanctuary	nfc	nocturnal flight call
MP	Millennium Park, W. Roxbury	ph	photographed
MSSF	Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth	pl	plumage
MtA	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.	pr	pair
MV	Martha's Vineyard	r	rescued
NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord	S	summer (1S = first summer)
Nbpt	Newburyport	subad	subadult
ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge	v.o.	various observers
Pd	Pond	W	winter (2W = second winter)
PG	Public Garden, Boston	yg	young
PI	Plum Island	#	additional observers

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO *BIRD OBSERVER*

Sightings for any given month should be reported to Bird Observer by the eighth of the following month. Reports should include: name and phone number of observer, name of species, date of sighting, location, number of birds, other observer(s), and information on age, sex, and morph (where relevant). Reports can be emailed to sightings@birdobserver.org or submitted online at <<http://www.birdobserver.org/Contact-Us/Submit-Sightings>>, or sent by mail to Bird Sightings, Robert H. Stymeist, 36 Lewis Avenue, Arlington MA 02474-3206.

Species on the Review List of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee, 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 Sean Williams, 18 Parkman Street, Westborough MA 01581, or by email to seanbirder@gmail.com.

ABOUT THE COVER

Brown Creeper

The only treecreeper in North America, the Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*) is a cryptic species. Its tree-creeping behavior is distinctive, but when it is stationary on a tree it is virtually invisible because its coloration blends perfectly with its surroundings. Its high-pitched call also makes it difficult to locate. As a result, much of its biology, including its migratory behavior, is poorly known. The Brown Creeper is mottled dark brown and white above and white below. It has fine white streaking on its brown crown and sports a prominent white supercilium. The bill is thin and decurved, and the long, stiff tail serves as a prop. The sexes are similar in plumage and juveniles resemble adults but are duller in appearance. A whopping 13 subspecies are currently recognized with *C. a. americana* occurring in our area. The Brown Creeper is closely related to the Old World Eurasian Treecreeper (*C. familiaris*), with which it was long considered conspecific.

Brown Creeper breeding range in the West is complex, extending in coastal and some interior areas from Alaska south through California and from southwest Canada south through the Rockies to southern Mexico, with outliers through Central America to Nicaragua. Their range extends from western Canada to Newfoundland, excluding the prairie regions. In the eastern United States, they range from the Great Lakes region to the Northeast and south to Virginia. Brown Creepers are resident through most of their range but in most of southern Canada through Newfoundland the population is migratory, wintering throughout most of the United States to northern Florida and northeastern Mexico. In Massachusetts, the Brown Creeper is considered an uncommon resident and uncommon to common migrant. Spring migrants pass through in late April and early May; fall migration occurs mostly in September.

Brown Creepers are probably monogamous and produce a single brood. Both song and calls consist of high-pitched *tee* notes. The song, given throughout the breeding season by males only, consists of a series of four to nine hissing notes. Little is known of courtship behavior, but chases are common, and wing-fluttering and courtship feeding of the female are known. Pair formation may occur in February or March, before the territory is established.

Brown Creepers breed in coniferous and coniferous-deciduous mature to old-growth forest, preferring closed-canopy forests with dead trees; their winter habitat is more variable. The nest site, located under a loose flap of bark or sometimes a cavity in a dead or dying tree, is chosen by both parents. They occasionally nest in odd places of human origin such as under loose roof shingles or behind a window shutter. The female constructs the nest and provides most of the nest material. The nest, which is connected to the loose bark, consists of a crescent-shaped base of bark and twigs, interlaced with spider web. The cup is attached to the base and is made of fine bark, hair, feathers, and lichen. The female, who develops a brood patch, incubates the clutch of five to six white eggs, spotted with dark colors, for about two weeks until hatching. The male feeds the incubating female. The chicks are altricial, nearly naked and with their eyes

closed. Only the female broods for the 15–17 days until fledging. The fledged young stay as a group with the parents or may split into two groups with each group following one adult. The young birds roost together away from their parents. Both parents feed the young for several weeks after fledging, but for how long after that is unknown.

Brown Creepers specialize in foraging for bark-dwelling invertebrates. They have long curved claws, long toes, short legs, and long stiff tails, all adaptations for hopping upwards and around tree trunks. Typically they start foraging at the bottom of a tree and spiral up it to the top, after which they fly to the base of a neighboring tree and repeat the process. They sometimes forage on branches as well. They mostly glean and probe the furrows in the bark with their long, decurved bills. They occasionally hawk flying insects and hover-glean. They take a wide variety of insects and larvae, spiders, pseudoscorpions (an arachnid group), and ants. They occasionally take seeds. In winter Brown Creepers may visit suet feeders and frequently join mixed-species foraging flocks.

Brown Creepers are subject to nest predation by squirrels and other mammalian predators; hawks and owls take adults. The presence of an avian predator is greeted by a freeze response; their cryptic plumage often saves them. In New England, numbers have increased over the decades, probably due to reforestation and the death of mature trees, such as elms from Dutch Elm disease, and damage from gypsy moth infestations. In the West, populations have declined due to deforestation. For example, they have decreased in the Pacific Northwest with the harvesting of old-growth Douglas fir forests. Population trends are difficult to assess, however, because of the cryptic nature of the species. The dependence of Brown Creepers on mature and old-growth forests is worrying because these forests experience heavy pressure from logging and other human interventions. We hope that our only treecreeper will continue to brighten our days in the future. 🐦

William E. Davis, Jr.

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

John Sill

John Sill is a freelance wildlife artist living in the mountains of North Carolina. He was the illustrator for the Bird Identification Calendar for Mass Audubon for many years. His work has appeared in *Birds In Art* at the Leigh-Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, Wisconsin, and in *Art of the Animal Kingdom* at the Bennington Center for the Arts in Vermont. He continues to illustrate the “About” and “About Habitats” series of natural history books for children written by his wife Cathryn. 🐦

AT A GLANCE

February 2018



DAVID M. LARSON

The mystery bird de jour has all the features of a raptor, most notably its stout, prominently hooked beak and the long talons visible on at least two of its toes. Before proceeding further in this analysis, readers are reminded that the identification of perched raptors can often be surprisingly challenging.

Having spent countless hours watching hawks in flight at various hawk-watching locations and in the course of regular birding at many different locations, I am constantly impressed by the apparent facility with which many birders routinely identify flying or soaring hawks, often at considerable distances. However I have also had numerous encounters with birders struggling over the identity of a perched raptor, and I include myself in this category! Because many raptors are more often viewed in flight than when perched, this phenomenon may not be surprising, although it does beg the question about the accuracy of certain distant flight identifications.

With this caveat in mind, we fortunately have an outstanding image of a perched bird to work with. A quick assessment of the picture reveals a chunky, large-headed raptor that has a short-tail with two or three conspicuous white bands, as well as a thin white line over and behind the eye. Additionally, the pictured bird has a vertically streaked breast with the streaks merging into largish dark and white blotches along the sides. It also shows several thin streaks on the crissum (undertail coverts).

Given the bird's stocky and neckless appearance, blocky head shape, relatively short tail, and primaries that extend well down onto the tail, the bird clearly is not an accipiter (i.e., Cooper's or Sharp-shinned hawk). Additionally, the presence of streaks on the crissum is uncharacteristic of an accipiter. Adults of both Red-shouldered and

Broad-winged hawks have prominent white tail bands, but in Broad-wings the bands are wide, often with only one wide band visible on a perched individual. Immatures of both of these species lack conspicuous white tail bands. The long primary length relative to the tail length of the mystery bird, and its chunky, compact appearance do not suggest Red-shouldered Hawk, and in the website version of the image, it is obvious that the rich, rusty orange found on the underparts of an adult Red-shoulder is absent.

With these features in mind, the pictured bird can only be one of two small falcons—Merlin or the similarly-sized American Kestrel. Though these two species can superficially resemble one another both perched and in flight, kestrels always exhibit two clear, black, facial markings—one resembling an ear patch and the other a sideburn. Kestrels, unlike the pictured falcon, also have a rusty tail without clear white bands. And structurally, kestrels are slimmer and less heavily marked underneath. The mystery raptor is therefore a Merlin (*Falco columbarius*). Because of the difficulty in distinguishing immatures from adult females, the age of the pictured bird is uncertain, but is most likely an adult female.

Merlins are uncommon to fairly common spring and fall migrants in Massachusetts, mainly along the coast, but also increasingly inland. They are also regular in small numbers in winter, often appearing in urban areas where they have all but replaced the beleaguered American Kestrel these days. Not only have Merlins increased as migrants and in winter, there has been an increasing number of nesting occurrences in Massachusetts. David Larson photographed this Merlin in Taunton, Massachusetts, on December 30, 2017. 🦅

Wayne R. Petersen



RAZORBILLS BY LANNY MCDOWELL

AT A GLANCE



WAYNE PETERSEN

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

MORE HOT BIRDS



Jeremiah Trimble found a third-year **Slaty-backed Gull** at Fresh Pond on February 16. A few days later, what was apparently the same bird was detected in Gloucester by Sean Williams! The bird was found only for one day in each location; is it still a one-day wonder if it is found for one day each in two different places? Sean took the photo on the left.

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