

# Bird Observer

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VOLUME 41, NUMBER 2

APRIL 2013



## HOT BIRDS

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On January 3 Linda Pivacek discovered a **Mew Gull** (right) at Nahant, and it continued to be seen from Nahant through Lynn to Swampscott. This photograph was taken by Suzanne Sullivan.



A non-birding homeowner was able to identify the new bird at his feeder on January 2: a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** (left). The homeowner permitted groups of birders to visit every day, and Jeremiah Trimble took this photograph on the 11th.

Pete Gilmore found this **LeConte's Sparrow** (right) on February 12 on Shadyside Avenue in Concord. Many got to see this bird, and check out this great portrait by Tom Murray!



**Pacific Loons** (left) are annual in Massachusetts, but normally seen offshore, so when Phil Brown discovered and photographed this bird just off Jodrey Pier in Gloucester on March 10, it was a bonus!

Alan Ankers discovered this **Fieldfare** (right) in Carlisle on St. Patrick's Day, and it was seen and enjoyed by many. This flight photograph was taken by Jeremiah Trimble.



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### BIRD OBSERVER ONLINE

*Bird Observer* is considering offering a web-based electronic version of the journal in addition to the current printed version. The subscription rate would likely be lower for those who choose to no longer receive the printed copy.

AS A TRIAL, we have posted the entire February issue on the *Bird Observer* website <<http://www.massbird.org/birdobserver/>>. We encourage you to take a look and send us your thoughts.

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# Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal—to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds  
VOL. 41, NO. 2 APRIL 2013

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# Birding the Connecticut River at Springfield

*George C. Kingston*

The Connecticut River valley is a major migration corridor in Western Massachusetts. In and around the city of Springfield, there are several access points that provide good views and good birding all year long. Each season brings its specialties. Winter is the season for gulls—including Iceland and Glaucous gulls—diving ducks, and geese. Spring brings passerines, including most of the warblers that nest north of the area such as Hooded Warbler. Late summer is the prime time for shorebirds, and autumn is excellent for hawks. What follows is a description of some of the better spots for viewing the river between the Connecticut line and the Chicopee River, starting from the south on the western bank, traveling north, then crossing over to the eastern bank and heading south again. The birds move up and down the river, so if one spot is barren, try another.



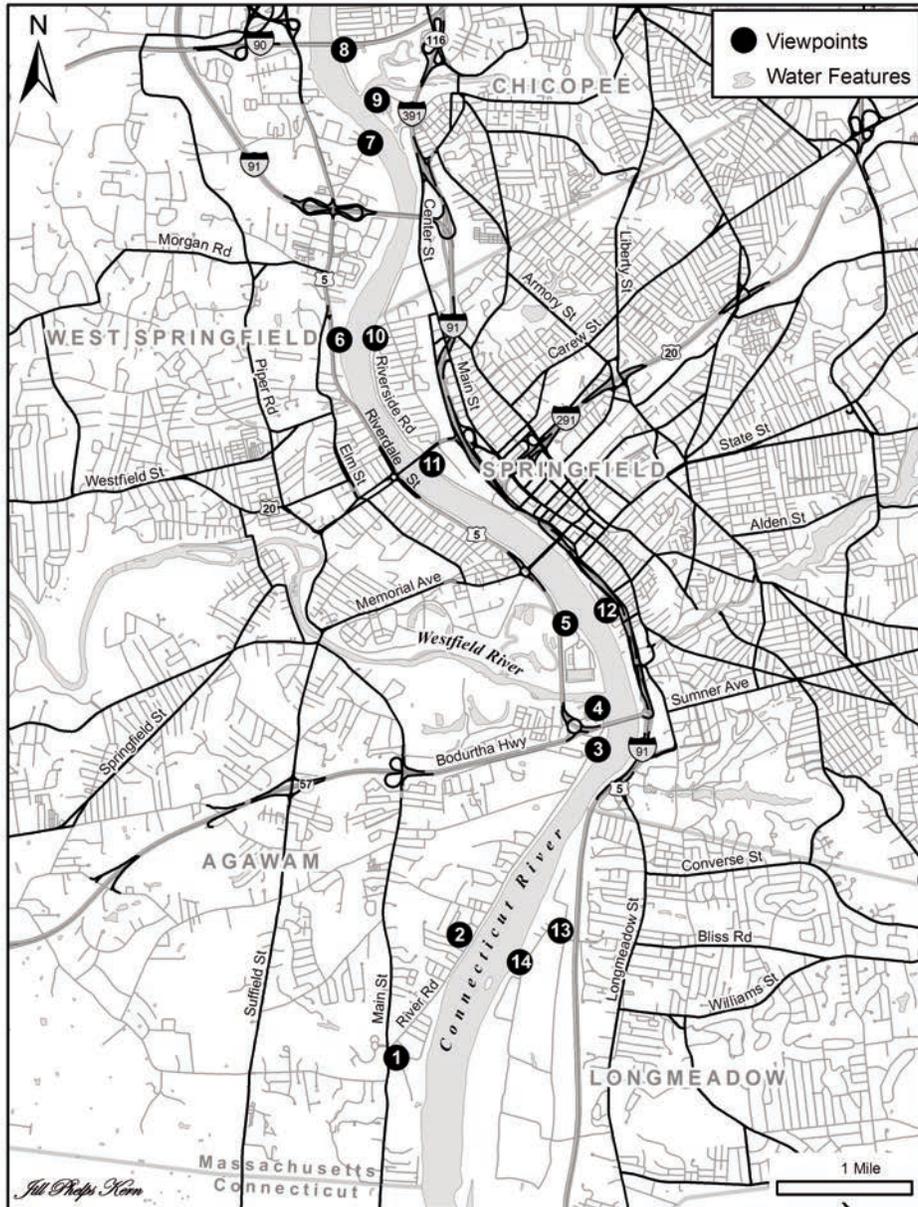
Regular ducks on the river include Ring-necked Duck, both scaup species, Common Goldeneye, and Common Merganser in winter, and Wood Duck, Mallard, and Hooded Merganser in summer and early fall. Rarities include Barrow's Goldeneye and several goose species. Check large flocks of Canada Geese for the occasional Cackling Goose, Pink-footed Goose, or Greater White-fronted Goose. Snow Geese are possible in late autumn. The wooded areas on the shore have many passerine species. Ospreys, Bald Eagles, and Peregrine Falcons nest along this stretch of the river and often hunt over it. Shorebirds use the sandbars and muddy banks, especially during late-summer migration. Swallows are plentiful during migration, and there are resident populations during the summer. Nighthawks follow the river valley south during migration in September.

## **1. Riviera Apartments**

Begin at the Riviera Apartments in Agawam. From Main Street, turn onto River Road and take the first right onto Riviera Drive. Follow the street to the parking lot by the river. This point gives a good view of the river. Look for ducks, including Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mallard, and Hooded Merganser; check the flocks of Canada Geese for Pink-footed, Cackling, and Greater White-fronted geese. The shrubbery along the shore is good for warblers during migration. If any of the residents have feeders out, check these carefully.

## **2. Agawam Riverwalk**

Return to River Road and go north for about one mile to the parking area along the right side of the street just north of Michael's Pasta in the Pan and across from Channell Drive. This spot gives good views of Willy's Island and the Longmeadow sandbar. Bald Eagles sometimes nest on the island and you can often observe them



sitting in the trees. The distance is too great for good shorebird observation, but if you see numbers of them, you can drive to the other side of the river to view them from the Longmeadow shore (as explained in the last stop on this tour). In autumn and late winter, look for large flocks of geese sheltering at the edge of the bank of the island and check them for rarities such as Pink-footed and Greater White-fronted goose.

### 3. Springfield Yacht and Canoe Club, Agawam

Go north on River Road about 1.7 miles to the Springfield Yacht and Canoe Club just before the South End Bridge. This is private property and generally off limits in the summer, but you will probably not be bothered in the winter. Look across the river to the outfall of Pecousic Brook for Bald Eagles. Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, and other diving ducks often congregate under the South End Bridge during the winter.

### 4. Pynchon Point, Agawam

Follow River Road north for 0.1 mile under the South End Bridge as it curves to the left and park in the small parking lot on the right at Pynchon Point. Follow the path down to the confluence of the Westfield and Connecticut rivers. Look up the Westfield River for Great Egret, Snowy Egret, and Great Blue and Green herons in season. Depending on the level of the rivers, access may be limited at times of high water. Check the rivers for Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mallard, and Hooded Merganser. Also look for Glaucous and Iceland gulls among the Great Black-backed, Herring and Ring-billed gulls. Check the trees for warblers during migration and Baltimore Orioles in the breeding season.



Hooded Merganser by David Larson

### 5. Bondi's Island, Agawam

Turn right out of the parking lot and continue along River Road. At the traffic circle, take the first right onto Route 5 north. After approximately 0.7 mile, just past the sewage treatment plant on your right, watch for the exit to the Pioneer Valley Resource Recovery Facility; it is poorly marked with a small blue and white sign. Take the exit and park at the boat launch. This is a good spot for Glaucous and Iceland gulls in winter. When the water level is low, you can walk out onto the mud flats for good views up and down the river. In late summer this is a good location for migrating shorebirds including Spotted, Western, and Least sandpipers. During nesting season check under Memorial Bridge to the north for Peregrine Falcons.

### 6. Thomas A. Lagodich boat launch, West Springfield

Return to Route 5 and go north about 2.8 miles. The limited access highway becomes a divided city street called Riverdale Street. Turn right at the second traffic light (Elm Street) into the Pride gas station and take an immediate left into the parking lot to access the boat launch. You must park in the upper lot and walk to the river, but the park-like setting is pleasant and is a good place to look for warblers during spring

and fall migration as well as Baltimore Orioles during the breeding season. Note: this area is not plowed in winter.

### **7. West Springfield dikes**

Return to Route 5 north and continue under Interstate 91. About 0.6 mile beyond the I-91 underpass, turn right onto Wayside Avenue and follow it to the end to access the dikes along the river. Park at the end of Wayside Avenue but do not block the gate. There is a gravel path to the right. In winter, this is a good spot for raptors, including Bald Eagles and Rough-legged Hawks.

### **8. Chicopee water treatment plant**

From the dike access gate, turn south onto Ashley Avenue to return to Route 5. (You cannot make a left turn onto Route 5 from Wayside Avenue.) Turn left and head south to I-91. Take a right onto the I-91 ramp but keep left at the fork and follow the signs for Springfield to merge onto I-91 South. Take I-91S across the Connecticut River, about 0.8 mile. Take Exit 12 to I-391 North. At approximately 1.5 miles, take



Bald Eagle by David Larson

Exit 3 (116 Westover/Willimansett) and turn left (north) onto Chicopee Street. At the first traffic light, about 0.5 mile, turn left onto Wilson Avenue. After 0.5 mile, at the T-intersection, turn left onto Old Field Road. After 0.4 mile, the street curves right and becomes Paderewski Street. Take the first left onto Granger Street, and follow the signs for the Chicopee waste treatment facility. Go under the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90), turn right onto Medina Street at the gates of the treatment plant,

and follow Medina Street down to the boat launch on the river. This spot provides great views downriver and under the Massachusetts Turnpike bridge. It is a good place to see raptors, including Red-tailed Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, and Bald Eagles flying over the river or perched on the far shore. Look for ducks, including Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mallard, and Hooded Merganser as well as Glaucous and Iceland gulls under the bridge. It is also a good spot for warblers during migration.

### **9. The Chicopee River, Chicopee**

Retrace your route to I-391 and go south. Take Exit 2 (116 Chicopee Center) and turn left onto Center Street. Take the first left onto West Street. After 0.2 mile, turn right onto Exchange Street, and then take the first left onto Depot Street. Follow Depot Street down to the water, just south of the confluence of the Chicopee and the Connecticut rivers. Bald Eagles like this spot for fishing, and the woods along the shore are good for migrating warblers in the spring.

## 10. Riverwalk in the north end of Springfield

Return southeast on Depot Street, turn left onto Exchange Street, then right onto West Street. Turn right onto Center Street. Center Street becomes Main Street in Springfield. After about 1.0 mile, take a right onto Wason Avenue and follow it to Riverside Road. Park on the street. From the path at the top of the dike there are good views over the river toward West Springfield. Look for ducks, including Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mallard, and Hooded Merganser; and raptors, especially Bald Eagle and Peregrine.

This is the north end of the Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway, which extends from here to the South End Bridge. The path runs along the river, but views are often obscured by vegetation. The area is good for warblers, however, during spring migration. Because some areas of the Riverwalk are isolated, if you are going to walk or bike the entire route, it is advisable to travel it in groups.

## 11. Municipal boat launch at Bassett Boat Company, Springfield

Drive south on Riverside Road to Route 20, then cross Route 20 directly into the municipal boat launch next to the Bassett Boat Company building. This access is public, and there is a public boat launch. There are good views downriver and under the North End Bridge. Once again, scan the river for ducks and raptors.

## 12. River Front Park, Springfield

Leave the marina and turn right onto Route 20. Turn right onto the exit ramp for I-91 south, but do not get on the highway; stay to the right on West Columbus Avenue, which is one way southbound. Follow West Columbus Avenue south to State Street. Park at the commuter train lot at the west end of State Street and cross the tracks through the old train station. If the lot is full, continue south on West Columbus Avenue and park at Mama Iguana's Restaurant or the Basketball Hall of Fame and use the pedestrian bridge to cross the railroad tracks. These are active tracks with high-speed trains. Use caution. Do not walk along the tracks. River Front Park gives an excellent view of the Connecticut River and looking upstream, of Memorial Bridge, the underside of which has been used by the resident Peregrines. Look for ducks including Common Merganser, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Mallard, and Hooded Merganser; Glaucous and Iceland gulls on the river; and Bald Eagles in the trees on the far side. This spot has the widest view of the sky on this stretch of the river, so it is good for hawk watching and seeing Nighthawks during migration.



Common Goldeneye by David Larson

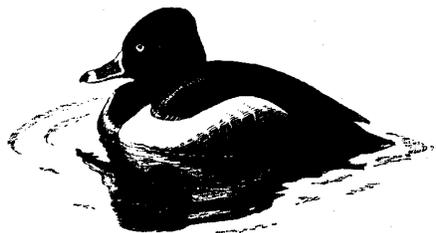
### 13–14. Longmeadow and the Sandbar

Continue along West Columbus Avenue south and get on the ramp for I-91 South. Keep left at the fork, and follow signs for I-91S/US-5 South/Hartford CT to merge onto I-91 S. Take Exit 1 (Route 5 South/Forest Park/Longmeadow). Follow Route 5 (Longmeadow Street) in Longmeadow for approximately 1.5 miles and turn right onto Emerson Road. After crossing under I-91, park on the right side of the road across from the DPW yard. Check the pond for Wood Ducks, Northern Shovelers, Green-Winged Teal, Great Blue Herons, and both Great and Snowy egrets in season.

Drive west across the railroad tracks. Again, these are active tracks with high-speed trains. Use caution. Do not walk along the tracks. Once across the tracks, follow Emerson Road as it curves left into West Road. About 0.5 mile on the right, after you pass the first group of houses, you will come to a dirt parking area. Park close to the road and follow a rough trail toward the river. Across from the bank is the Longmeadow sandbar, which is one of the premier shorebird spots in this area. Depending on the level of the river, you may be able to wade out to the sandbar, but remember that river levels can change rapidly depending on water flow management for power at the Holyoke dam. You can also observe the sandbar through a spotting scope from the bank. The best time of year for shorebird migration is mid-July through mid-August. Many locally rare shorebirds, including Willet, Red Knot, Stilt Sandpiper, Long-Billed Dowitcher, and Red Phalarope, as well as Bonaparte's and Franklin's gulls and Forster's and Sooty terns, have been reported over the years. A Northern Wheatear was once found here. You can also find waders, raptors, swallows, and more common gulls and terns. On spring evenings, look and listen for American Woodcock in the fields across from the parking lot.

In addition to birding along the Connecticut River, you can bird from the river. You can launch canoes, kayaks, and small boats from Bondi's Island, the Lagodich boat launch (only canoes or boats that can be carried), the Chicopee boat launch on Medina Street, the Springfield municipal boat launch, and, with a bit of a rough carry, the Longmeadow sandbar. There are numerous restaurants in the area. 🦋

*George Kingston has been a serious birder since 1977. He has resided in and birded the Springfield area since 1979 and is a past president of the Allen Bird Club. He and his wife, Jean Delaney, have birded on all seven continents.*



RING-NECKED DUCK BY WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR.

## The Brookline Bird Club: 1988–2013

*Jane Lothian*

In the last decade of the 20th century, environmental concerns were challenging members to redouble conservation efforts. The close of 1988 found the Brookline Bird Club on the brink of the Information Age. Technological advances were rewriting the rules for organizing trips and sharing reports.

Citizen's Band radios kept cars together on BBC trips and helped solo birders. At birding hotspots like Plum Island, Gloucester, or Cumberland Farms, a member could put out a call about a sighting and, more often than not, another BBC member would respond looking for information. The last update of the BBC C.B. radio list, in January 2002, included the handles (call signs) of 196 participants. Handles sometimes reflected the owner's profession (such as Bank Swallow for Joe Paluzzi or Golden Crown for dentist Irving Romanow) or his or her name (Chris and Judy Hepburn's Rosy Finch came from the "Hepburn's" form of the Gray-crowned Rosy Finch).

The Club's telephone hotline alerted the Club's avid listers to local rarities. Like many members of the period, Sabrina Hepburn recalls answering many a phone call during dinner on a Friday or Saturday night and hearing "I've got a BBC hotline report," then engaging her family to reschedule weekend priorities. Periodically, a caller accidentally omitted some critical turn or instruction during this game of "Telephone," leading to "much cursing" when recipients tried to find the bird, but like many BBC birders of the time, Sabrina feels that she owes more than a few life birds to the service.

A typical hotline situation occurred on January 10, 1992. Joseph Mann of East Gloucester put out some raisins for cardinals atop a Hav-A-Hart trap in his yard and attracted a Yellow-breasted Chat. Mann invited Jerry Soucy and Judge Lawrence Jodrey to share the sighting and told Soucy he could tell anyone he wanted. Before the day ended, a "parade of birders" began. Thanks to the BBC Hotline, over 300 people saw the chat. Stan Bolton, who visited several times, got Mann to join the BBC. Wrote Mann, "Jerry Soucy had given me information before but I never realized all the great people and great birding I would enjoy with the club, not to mention all the lifers I've seen since joining." (Mann 1993)

Brookline Bird Club directors took public relations seriously. Since the 1960s, the *Brookline Bird Club Bulletin* (the blue outing booklet unofficially known as the Blue Book) had included a statement emphasizing respect for private property. The Club created a Birding Etiquette Committee in 1991 and published its own Code of Ethics, adopted from the American Birding Association's Code of Ethics, to address concerns over birder behavior, particularly when in pursuit of rarities. The code included tenets such as "Birders must always act in ways that do not endanger the welfare of birds or other wildlife," "Birders must always respect the rights of others," and "Birders in groups should assume special responsibilities." (Brookline Bird Club Board of Directors 1993)

Members enjoyed expanding their lists, but were also passionate about conservation. Meeting minutes reflect a longstanding debate about the Club's primary purpose. After another Director suggested that the primary mission of the Club was leading field trips, Board Member Alden Clayton wrote to the Board in April 1990, "In this time of environmental crisis, I feel that we should all, singly and collectively, do what we can to support, in a variety of ways, worthy causes and help build public awareness about environmental issues." Clayton concluded, "I believe that any retrogression to a narrow focus for the BBC would be unfortunate." (Clayton 1990)

Indeed, BBC members were among the most active volunteers at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. In 1989, a total of 70 volunteers donated 3,468 hours of work to the refuge, with six BBC members contributing more than 100 hours of service. Projects included tern warden duty, goose round up, waterfowl brood counts, lead shot sampling, trail maintenance, computer program development, and Wood Duck box restoration (Oliver 1990).

Club members and officers followed environmental legislation at the state and local levels. In 1990, Barbara Howell testified before the Committee on Natural Resources in support of the Massachusetts River Protection Act. "Despite having to inform the committee that the Governor was not a member of the Brookline Bird Club, Barbara's testimony was well received," noted president Stephen Moore in a letter to officers and directors. (Moore 1990.) Barbara Howell succeeded Steve to become the Club's first woman president in 1991.

Individual Club members made significant contributions to education at the state and national levels. The club nominated Paul Roberts for the Audubon "A" award from the Massachusetts Audubon Society and Bob Campbell for Mass Audubon's Conservation Teacher of the Year. Mark Blazis was named Nature Educator of the Year in 1993 by the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History. Mark's students at Auburn Middle School produced field guides to the birds, trees, butterflies, reptiles, and amphibians of southern Worcester County.

On Oct 23, 1991, the Conservation Committee was revived to further the Club's conservation efforts through coordinated initiatives in education, legislation, censusing, and volunteerism. Spring 1992 projects initiated by the committee included an Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary breeding bird census and a bird walk for children at Great Meadows. Trip leader Sabrina Hepburn remembers a Great Meadows walk where most of a troop of Boy Scouts showed up, working on their birdwatching badges. She recalls, "It must have been one of the first warm days of the spring, and everywhere you looked there were northern water snakes sunning themselves up and down the edge of the causeway. It was almost impossible to bring the attention of the boys back to birds once they started spotting and chasing snakes, but it was a great nature experience, so I still chalked it up as a win."

The Club partnered with other organizations to leverage its bird conservation efforts at the local, state, and even international level. After co-sponsoring Manomet Bird Observatory (MBO) presentations on arctic shorebirds and Belizean waterbirds in 1989 and 1990, the BBC joined the MBO/Mass Birders Forum. The Forum was a

cooperative effort of MBO and 18 Massachusetts bird clubs to help protect threatened birds and their habitats throughout the Western hemisphere. The Forum's first project was a drive to collect used binoculars, spotting scopes, and tripods for field biologists and grassroots conservation organizations in Latin America, where a lack of basic equipment frustrated research and conservation efforts. As the successful project expanded, the Mass Birders Forum became the Birders' Exchange, and in 2000 it came under the auspices of the American Birding Association. The Club still collects books and optics for the program and recently received an ABA/BEX commendation award from Birders' Exchange coordinator Betty Petersen.

In 1991 the Club suffered two significant losses. Ruth P. Emery, who had been active in *Bird Observer* and served as the original Voice of Audubon, passed away at 93. In 1974, Ruth had been elected one of the two first women members of the Nuttall Ornithological Club; the other was Margaret Argue. Mary McCarthy, long time resident and teacher in Watertown who led many BBC trips in Mount Auburn Cemetery, passed away and left a gift to the Club that enabled the purchase of a computer to manage the membership database.

Membership was booming by 1994. Of over 1300 members, 170 were from states other than Massachusetts. Heading the list was New Hampshire with 44; next was Connecticut with 27. There were 22 in New York and 17 in Rhode Island. Nine



Hawaiian Shirt Shorebird Safari watches a Curlew Sandpiper on South Beach, August 2003.  
Photo by Eddie Giles.

members lived in Maine, five each in Vermont and Virginia, and four in Ohio, California and Michigan. There were also one, two, or three members in 16 other states. That year, the Club set up an electronic mail branch of the rare bird alert hotline to supplement the phone hotline. In May 1996 the email hotline had 130 addresses, and Barbara Volkle asked for volunteers to transcribe the rare bird alerts onto the Club web page. Barbara also started MASSBIRD, a mailing list dedicated to the interchange of wild bird and birding information relevant to Massachusetts and New England. MASSBIRD was not a BBC Club project but soon became a popular tool for sharing trip reports and publicizing impromptu trips.

As the Club grew, so did its contributions to conservation and education. In 1994, annual dues rose to \$10, enabling the Club to donate \$200 to the Crane Reservation for Piping Plover and Least Tern protection and \$300 to Great Meadows NWR toward the purchase of a harvester to control the growth of algae and water chestnuts, an aquatic weed. The BBC also co-sponsored the sixth annual Birder's Meeting with Mass Audubon on November 19, 1994. Perhaps the most significant investment for the Club that year was the purchase of a cassette player, a projector and 40x40 screen, and "Familiar Eastern Birds," a set of slides from VIREO (Visual Resources for Ornithology), a photograph collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences. The Conservation Committee used the equipment to create presentations about bird behavior and identification for elementary schools and conservation groups. Starting in 1995, the club also developed identification workshops for members on spring warblers, fall sparrows, and waterfowl. The workshops, which consist of a classroom lecture followed by a field trip to practice identification skills, remain popular offerings in current Blue Books.

The Conservation Committee started the BBC School Library Book Fund in 1996. With the Club matching a percentage of member contributions, member John Melithoniotes delivered \$470 of bird books (about 50 books) to the Roger Clap Elementary School in Boston in 1997 and another 35 bird books, CDs, and videos to the Oliver Hazard Perry school in 1998. In 2007, Dave Williams coordinated the BBC School Library Book Fund, working with the Boston Nature Center to identify schools.

Through it all, the Club continued to enjoy great birding. Massachusetts became "Raptor Heaven in 1997" (Stymeist 1997), starting when a Boreal Owl took up residence in the Back Bay from November 22, 1996, through February 13, 1997. "Any errand to downtown became a pleasure with this reliable reward thrown in," one member wrote. Notable sightings also included Black Vultures on the Dartmouth/Westport town line at a Turkey Vulture roost, Mississippi Kites in Rowley and Orleans, and a light-phase Swainson's Hawk in West Newbury. Weather was also significant; when a devastating April storm broke many trees in Mount Auburn, the Club donated \$500 toward tree cleanup. In a reference to the flagging economy, two members reported that their best birding experience of the year was "getting laid off in May." On a more somber note, the statistician's report noted the deaths of Skip Charette, Nancy Clayton, Jean Foley, Dick Forster, Josh Nove, Phil Parsons, and Nancy Powell. "They left the world diminished by their passing." (Stymeist 1997)

Thomas Prince and John D. Kennedy led the club after Barbara Howell. Glenn d'Entremont, who became Club President in 1997, stressed energy awareness in Blue Book letters to members. "We, as Americans, consume 80 percent of the earth's resources. We should be constantly monitoring our own consumption," he wrote. (d'Entremont 1997) D'Entremont urged members to car pool and design walks for public transportation users. The next President was Ida Giriunas, followed by Robert Petersen and Linda Ferraresso.

1998 featured the first weekend trip to Rangeley Lakes to concentrate on Maine's boreal specialties. Two Massachusetts trips were extended into the Granite State that year, to see a Varied Thrush just over the border and the Little Egret in Newmarket. On March 1, BBC trip participants viewed a Bullock's Oriole in Reading at the feeder of Donna Schromm, who joined the BBC and served as Membership Secretary from 2001 to 2004.



BBC Rangeley Lakes club trip, photo by Eddie Giles.

The Club took full advantage of technological advances. In March 1996 the Board approved a Club web page on an experimental basis, stipulating that the trip listing include email addresses for most listings and avoid posting leader names or phone numbers unless authorized. After directors voiced concerns that membership would plummet when the trip listings became available online for free, the Club decided to list Limited Participation trips only in the printed Blue Book. Whale watching trips were scheduled on the fly on the first weekend day before or after a Nor'easter and were announced through the BBC phone and email hotlines and on

MASSBIRD. The first BBC trip leaders to use Family Radio Service (FRS) radios were Fay and Peter Vale, who shared sightings when splitting up large groups in Mount Auburn Cemetery and the Ipswich River Sanctuary. On the second Rangeley trip in 1999, Mark Burns and Steve Leonard each brought a new FRS radio, without knowing that the other had one. “We used them on the hike up Mount Blue, the day we got the Three-toed Woodpecker,” trip leader Eddie Giles recalls. Steve chose channel 10/33 (the address of a former apartment), which became the club channel until the Board voted to adopt the national FRS channel of 11/22. Notes Giles, “I was on the Board at the time and recall fighting to keep 10/33 in memory of Steve,” who had passed away by then. “We still use 10/33 on my Rangeley trips,” he adds.

Other members and former members associate the Club with successful “chases.” After moving to California, Alison Kent painted a portrait of the birding community



Mount Auburn in the 1990s. Photographer unknown. Front row L to R: Pat Young, Lainie Epstein, Linda Ferraresso, Ann Smith Back row L to R: Carolyn Cardwell, Oakes Spalding, Lew Bushnell, Sandy Shepard

respond to their reports determines whether they will join this community or not.” (Kent 2001)

The BBC did encourage beginners, particularly young ones. John Mittermeier describes being introduced to the Brookline Bird Club in 1999 as a seventh grader by Peter Alden. “Before long I was tagging along on BBC trips across the state: I saw my first Bald Eagle off the chain bridge near Newburyport with Peter, took a winter BBC trip to Gloucester with Linda Ferraresso, visited the Fenway Victory Gardens with Bob Stymeist when he found a MacGillivray’s Warbler and a Yellow-breasted Chat (Bob seemed surprised at the time that I was far more excited about the chat), and traveled to various corners of the state with Wayne Petersen, Simon Perkins, Marj Rines, and others.”

Like many a new birder, John worked through every page of the BBC’s blue outing booklet that year, folding corners and circling and highlighting trips that

there. “As I write, seventy miles to my west is a bird that is a probable first for the Western hemisphere, a Greater Sandplover... In Massachusetts, a bird of this rarity would immediately have prompted two well-organized chases on consecutive weekend days, the call would have gone out on MASSBIRD and by phone telling people where to meet, what to expect, and what books to study, and there would have been at least 200 people from the Brookline Bird Club alone,” Kent speculated. “Following the ‘see the bird first, ask questions later’ rule, everyone, including beginners, would have been urged to come along.” She concluded, “Tomorrow’s leaders are today’s beginners. How we talk to them and

looked interesting. He called or emailed the trip organizer, and “invariably they would be able to pick me up and give me a ride or know someone else going who could.” By spring, he was biking over to Mount Auburn Cemetery every morning to join BBC trips before school.

In this case, the Club helped to cultivate a professional ornithologist. “Thirteen years later, I am now a graduate student in ornithology working with Robb Brumfield at the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science in Baton Rouge,” writes Mittermeier. “My interests in birds and birding are still strong: I spent this past summer in Indonesia conducting bird surveys on Pulau Obi, a remote island in the Northern Moluccas of eastern Indonesia. Our work on Obi resulted in 14 new records for the island, including a four-inch long pygmy parrot that may be an undescribed species and resulted in some of the first photographs of the enigmatic Moluccan Woodcock. Over the next few years, I am hoping to continue my PhD research on island biogeography, speciation and conservation of birds in eastern Indonesia and develop this into a career in ornithology after graduation.”

He concludes, “Had it not been for my early membership in the BBC and the exceptional generosity of Massachusetts birders in introducing me to birding; giving me rides to Plum Island, Gloucester, Quabbin Reservoir and others; and always encouraging my growing interest, I would not be where I am today.” (Mittermeier 2012)

A new generation finds the same support from current Club members and leaders. Young birder Benjamin Peters notes that, “Every meeting and every trip I learn something new.” Asked about leaders who inspire him, he cites a May 5, 2012, trip where Dave Hursch managed to get the Kentucky Warbler in the scope for everyone to see.

Jeremiah Sullivan enthuses about his own experience. “I’ve been birding with the Brookline Bird Club for just over three years.... Even on the first day at Dunback Meadow in Lexington, I knew this was something I wanted to do.” He cites the support of his father and many of the leaders who mentored club members throughout the 1990s. These include Mark Burns, Laura de la Flor, Eddie Giles, Paul Ippolito, and Marj Rines, who “helped build my early skills up so much by directing me to challenging programs, directing me to good birding locales and never allowing my young age to be a hindrance or keep me from participating in programs geared to adults.”

As the year 2000 approached, the media fanned fears that data storage where the year was represented with two digits could cause date-related processing to malfunction. The statistician’s report noted that birders were undaunted by the hype over Y2K. “Most of us ignored the warnings of the year, shut off our computers and went to bed early to start a New Year of birding,” wrote Bob Stymeist (Stymeist 2002).

What a year it was! An all-time high of 290 Club trips were scheduled in 2000: 73 all-day, 180 morning, 31 afternoon or evening, and six weekend trips. Eighty

leaders guided Club members. Among them was Helen Wilber Bailey, who led her third annual weekend trip to Nantucket for Oldsquaw flights, inspired by a February 1987 *Bird Observer* article describing flights at dawn and dusk of 100,000+ birds. The year 2000 also saw a dramatic increase in the number of pelagic trips, scheduled primarily through the efforts of Emmalee Tarry. A total of 13 pelagic trips were listed, including three dedicated charters, one to the far offshore area of Cashes Ledge. Other trips were whale watches from Newburyport, Gloucester, Plymouth, Barnstable, and Provincetown. On October 16 the Club celebrated and acknowledged all its leaders at a Leader Appreciation Day at Wompatuck State Park in Hingham.

The biggest trip list of 2001 was compiled by Bill Drummond's May 19 Newburyport trip, which reported 122 species. Bill commented that it was a poor migration day and that the group had to work hard for every species, but nonetheless they recorded a late Snow Goose, a Ruff and a Reeve at the salt pans on Plum Island, a "grand slam" on all the swallows, and 17 species of warblers. On November 25, Jonathan Center extended his own Newburyport trip to Cape Neddick, Maine, to add the Sage Thrasher to the Club list, only to find another BBC trip already there. Through the hotlines, Bill Drummond had added an unscheduled trip to ensure getting the bird for the Club list. It seems appropriate that the Brookline Bird Club donated \$11,000 to Massachusetts Audubon that year for its new Joppa Flats center; the total was composed of individual member donations plus a Club donation.

At the Annual Meeting on April 26, 2002, Shawn Carey first presented his 16-minute DVD movie "Looking Skyward: A Passion for Hawk Watching." Shawn then played the video "Kestrel's Eye" from Sweden. Coincidentally, a Eurasian Kestrel had been seen the week before at Chatham, although not reported for five days. For those who had not seen the kestrel, "the 90 minutes were a nightmare. But for just about everyone else, it was one of the most popular videos ever shown at a BBC meeting and the auditorium was packed," wrote William Drummond, Corresponding Secretary and former Club President. Fortunately, he saw the bird the following Monday. (Drummond 2002)

The Club celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on November 8, 2003, at the Peabody Marriott Hotel. The occasion featured a cocktail reception, vendors, and a catered dinner. Highlights included a slide show of member photographs, door prizes, and a keynote address by birding guide Shawneen Finnegan, followed by coffee and dessert. The evening was topped off by the audience participation game, "Who Wants to Be a Birder?" hosted by Eddie Giles.

Member Doug Chickering recalls that, "Although a bit anomalous in its formality, it was an evening of the club. Every Massachusetts birder knows exactly what you mean when you refer to the Club, just as they know what is meant by Gate 45, or Hellcat, or Marconi, or the Dell. All are integral parts of our lives, points of reference in our endless adventure. Some of the faces on the screen are gone, the others have grown old; but the birds are forever." (Chickering 2003)

Former president Steve Grinley adds, "Yet on this evening of the lunar eclipse, the talk was not all about birds. During dinner, there were beautiful pictures of birds

flashed up on the two large screens at either end of the room. A Plum Island Snowy Owl, the Boston Gyrfalcon, the Essex Rufous Hummingbird, the Salisbury Ivory Gull, the Rowley Great Gray Owl and, of course, the Ross's Gull that put Newburyport on the birding map in the mid-70s. But interspersed there were many more photos of members. Many of us saw our younger and thinner selves, in birding garb that would embarrass us today. For me the evening was not about seeing again the Ross' Gull, but seeing again lost friends Herman Weisberg and Phil Parsons, who originally found the bird." (Grinley 2003)

The club's 91<sup>st</sup> year, 2004, was a banner year for sightings. The Club list total of 311 was an astonishing 86% of all the species seen statewide that year. These species included a Red-footed Falcon, the first confirmed record for Massachusetts and North America. Club members saw the falcon on both a diverted and an extended South Beach trip on August 14, the first weekend day after its discovery. An army of birders stormed the island by noontime, including the colorful members of a special club trip led by Eddie Giles, the Hawaiian Shirt Shorebird Safari to South Beach (Stymeist 2005). The original trip was not cancelled; Mark Burns led 11 other members over to the Beach and on to the Vineyard afterwards to see the falcon that evening.

Members continued to seize opportunities to observe birds at sea. On August 28, 2004, an "extreme pelagic" scheduled to Hydrographer Canyon was a remarkable adventure for 80 birders who departed Hyannis Harbor at 4 a.m. The trip never reached its original destination, as it diverted to Veatch's Canyon from Hydrographer when satellite images revealed water temperatures of nearly 80 degrees. The trip recorded Audubon's Shearwater, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, Great and South Polar skuas, and Bridled Tern, some birds flying alongside the boat and others perched on floating wood. In addition to these great birds, participants enjoyed basking sharks, two hammerhead and one blue shark, and hundreds of flying fish

In 2005, under Club President Joseph Paluzzi, the Club held its first Winter Lecture Meeting, in Bedford. Featured speaker Wayne Petersen delivered a talk on shorebirds. Annual dues were raised to \$15, and members continued to support conservation projects and enjoy excellent speakers. At the Spring Meeting Dr. John Kricher of Wheaton presented some new information on global warming and its possible effect on migratory patterns. Later that year, Donald Kroodsma, author of *The Singing Life of Birds*, shared research, recordings, and slides at the Fall Meeting. That year, the Club contributed \$1,000 to Barnstable Land Trust to help buy two acres amid over 105 protected acres in the Cummaquid section, inhabited by woodcocks, bluebirds, bobwhites, and raptors.

Dennis Oliver retired from the Board of Directors in 2006, after 22 years on the Board, including serving as Recording Secretary from 1987 to 2004. Dennis also coordinated and compiled the Ipswich River Breeding Bird Survey for over 15 years. In addition, he took part in many TASL counts, the Cape Cod Waterfowl Survey, and three Christmas Bird Counts, serving as Waltham section leader for the Greater Boston Count. His brother David reports that they first encountered a BBC trip led by Jerry Soucy and Judge Jodrey in November 1977 on Plum Island. Nancy Clayton,

along on the trip, was “delightful, warm, and embracing. She gave us our first blue book and from there we went on as many BBC trips as we could. We wished we could attend every one.” (Oliver 2006)

Laura de la Flor became Club President in 2007. Former President Ida Giriunas, honored with a Certificate of Appreciation by the club, reflected, “When I was working, birding was a lifesaver, and it helped me keep my sanity; now, in retirement, birding is a lifesaver because it helps me to keep getting around.” As pelagic trip organizer, Ida added an unscheduled Hydrographer Canyon trip on August 19, where almost 70 participants enjoyed a record number of Audubon’s Shearwaters (17) and “killer looks” at five sperm whales (Stymeist 2008). Three Bridled Terns and six species of whales and dolphins were highlights of the first trip to the offshore canyons on July 19. A Little Shearwater recorded August 25 was the first documented sight record for North America, and a new species for Massachusetts bird list.

The sixth annual Winter Meeting featured the first Members Night, held at the John Glenn Middle School in Bedford on Friday February 29, 2008. Slide and video talks by members ranged from unusual bird lists to trip reports in New England and Africa. The year 2008 also offered the first BBC family memberships and the first Cape Cod Waterfowl Prowl, led by Eddie Giles and Mary Kelleher on March 15. Attempting to locate as many of the 29 species of ducks as possible in one day on Cape Cod ponds, the group saw 27 duck species and 61 species overall.

Word spread about rarities enjoyed on BBC pelagic trips. The July 18, 2009, pelagic, the Club’s first trip to Atlantis Canyon, was booked solid with several on the wait list. As in previous years, participants came from every New England state and from other areas including Oklahoma, Missouri, New York, Georgia, and Montreal. The trip did not disappoint, producing the Club’s first Black-capped Petrel, a new state high record of 19 Audubon’s Shearwaters, and 58 Leach’s Storm-Petrels. On September 3, a twice-postponed trip to the Continental Shelf smashed state records for White-faced Storm Petrel, Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, Bridled Tern, and Long-tailed Jaeger.

The Club connected current and potential members via social media in 2010. Its Twitter account (@bbcbirds) spreads small snippets of information quickly, such as rare bird sightings, trip cancellations, or updates. The Club’s Facebook page (Brookline Bird Club) shares photos, links and videos with members. In April 2010, the Blue Book introduced Birding 101, “trips ideal for beginners or non-birding friends (pre-birders) who might like to come along and see what it’s all about.” There was no better example of what it was “all about” than Doug Chickering’s nomination for best bird of 2010. “Without a doubt the best bird of the year is one that nobody saw,” Chickering wrote of a twilight gathering to listen, moments before the refuge closed for the night. “I don’t think I have ever seen so many birders so delighted NOT seeing a bird—that great phantom of birding, the Black Rail. I still get a quiet pleasure when I recall that *ki-ki-krrr* drifting over to us in the gathering darkness from the North Pool on Plum Island.” (Stymeist 2011) Similar scenes surely inspired President Barbara Volkle to note, “The very core of the Club’s prosperity is the camaraderie that exists between its members.” (Volkle 2011)



BBC members, guests, and snowman on 2001 Owl Prowl. Photo by Laura de la Flor. Left to Right: Mark Burns, Jane Lothian, Steve DeMolles, Glenn d'Entremont, Eddie Giles, Scott DeMolles. Helen Bailey, two unidentified participants, Denise Peloquin.

In 2011, some leaders connected the Club with their own local environmental organizations, such as the Woburn Residents Environmental Network, Nahant Open Space Committee, the Merrimac and Ipswich River Watershed Councils, Arboretum Park Conservancy, and the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. Although cross-pollination attracted some new members, membership numbers continued to fluctuate. Brookline Bird Club membership totaled 1274 in 2002, declined to 1183 in 2005, jumped to 1263 in 2006, and dropped to 1020 in 2010. In 2011, the total began to climb again with an annual total of 1146.

President Edward M. Giles took office in 2012 to lead the Club into its centenary year. The speaker for the February 3 Winter Meeting was Greg Miller, whose 1998 quest to see as many birds as possible in a single year was the subject of a book and a movie, both called *The Big Year*. BBC birders had gathered to view the film in Burlington, Massachusetts, earlier that year, complete with a parking lot tailgate party to share refreshments. For 2013 the BBC plans its own Big Year, an effort to break the Club records of 302 species seen on BBC trips in Massachusetts and 314 on BBC trips throughout New England. A special series of trips emphasizes some of the most elusive species, and visitors to the Club web page <<http://www.brooklinebirdclub.org>> can track the Club's progress through the year there. The Anniversary Committee also plans to recreate the first Club trip at Fresh Pond in September, and will host an evening gala event on September 28.

Birders continue to flock to the Club. Guests hear about it from friends, through chance meetings in the field, or via MASSBIRD trip reports. Membership secretary Leslie Kramer reports that renewals for 2013 already exceed the trend of recent years, with 793 renewals and 11 new members as of January. “Now the challenge is how can everything the BBC offers benefit people who rely increasingly on the Internet and ‘digital birding,’ and consequently are often birding alone. People need what the BBC offers now more than ever,” says former Club President Paul Roberts.

In 1975, the Club received a letter from Helen Kaan, whose mother, Mary Moore Kaan, organized the first meeting. Helen donated \$500 to the BBC to keep dues low in memory of her mother and remarked that it was “wonderful that the club has kept its original character and purpose through all these changing years.” The Brookline Bird Club, she felt, had fulfilled Mary Kaan’s dream.

The Club still unites birders of all ages and abilities to study and protect New England’s avian life. It offers lectures, workshops, volunteer projects, and of course, trips as diverse as New England’s habitats. Club trips have explored Nauset Marsh by kayak and ridden the aerial tramway to the top of Cannon Mountain for Bicknell’s Thrush. Members have trudged the changing perimeter of Monomoy Island, scanned the wilds of Quabbin and the walls of the Worcester Art Museum, sailed to deep-water canyons, and waited at backyard feeders. They have photographed, tweeted, and atlased. As long as there are local nesters, migrants, or storm-blown vagrants, BBC birders will seek them out to study, protect, and share. The future of the Brookline Bird Club looks bright, as its vibrant membership and creative leaders welcome the adventure of the club’s next century. 🐦

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*Jane Lothian is a Brookline Bird Club life member who has served as trip leader, director, and the club's first webmaster. Her last contribution to Bird Observer was "Hotlines and Birding Talk By Computer" in February 1994 (as Jane Lufkin Davis). She writes software documentation for SAP and lives in Maynard, where her yard birds include Barred Owls.*



CANVASBACK BY SANDY SELESKY

# Wild Care: A Bellwether for Avian Health

*Stephanie Ellis and Alexandra Mueller*

What is an individual's intrinsic worth to a species? Can one bird saved from a preventable death go on to rejoin and thereby help preserve the wild population? Wild Care believes that knowledge imparted from working with individuals not only benefits the species but also contributes to a collective knowledge base. On January 14, 2012, during a commercial duck hunt on St. Paul Island, Alaska, a hunter retrieved a male King Eider that happened to have a federal band. The band report indicated that International Bird Rescue (IBR) had rescued the bird in 1996 during a remote oil spill off Alaska's Pribilof Islands. The eider survived 16 years after it had been rehabilitated and banded by the IBR. Although evidence of one bird's successful rehabilitation can hardly lead us to draw conclusions about the overall survivability of rehabilitated birds, this example shows that individual birds can become bio-sentinels for recovering populations, whole species, and even environmental health.

## **The History of Wildlife Rehabilitation**

Wildlife rehabilitation began with isolated individuals taking in injured backyard birds, displaced nestlings, and other wildlife—then “winging it,” pun intended. As a vocation, rehab gained traction in the 1970s, responding to increasing environmental awareness, urban sprawl, and habitat destruction. The Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek, California, became the first formalized wildlife rehabilitation center in 1970, just in time for the 1971 Standard Oil Spill, which dumped 840,000 gallons of crude oil into San Francisco Bay. Ecological disasters and everyday negative human influence created a need for the rehabilitation field, a need that was not easily met by scientists or veterinarians. In attempting to satisfy an ever-changing and growing demand, wildlife rehabilitation has come a long way since the 1970s. It is more than an expression of the human emotional need to minister to needy individuals, more than fulfillment for the sentimental at heart. Wildlife centers and the animals they receive provide a snapshot in time of what is happening within a species population. They are a link between the environment, the public, and the scientific community and a pathway to increased awareness of local—even global—epidemics facing our birds.

One of the most evident changes in the rehab field is the expansion of networks and a growing foundation of shared knowledge. Notable forerunners include organizations such as the Oiled Wildlife Care Network at the University of California at Davis, which rescues oiled seabirds and tracks their survival; the National Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association (NWRA), dedicated to improving and promoting the profession and professionalism of wildlife rehabilitation; and the aforementioned IBR, the International Bird Rescue of California, which takes wildlife rehab beyond the borders of the United States. All of these organizations share a common goal of aiding individuals while acting to preserve natural ecosystems. Most recently, WILD-ONE, an online patient database software created by the Wildlife Center of Virginia, has begun standardizing the collection of information for animals that are admitted to

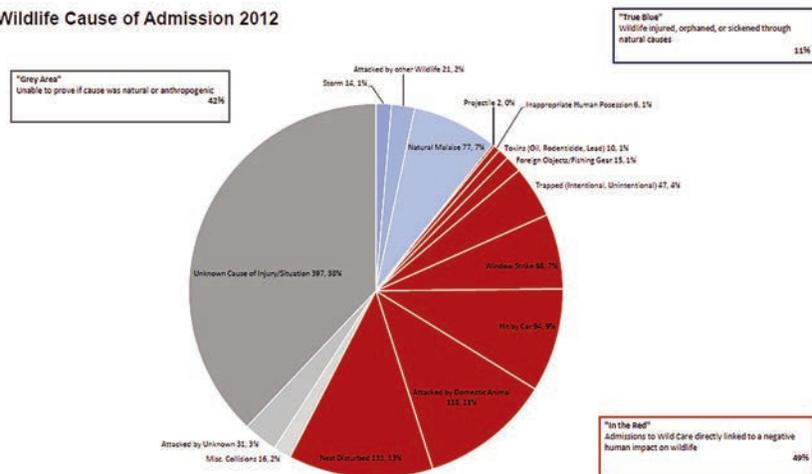
wildlife hospitals throughout the country. The software not only has the capacity to show the biological makeup of nationwide rehab facilities, but also incorporates the GPS coordinates of rescue and release sites and can be used in conjunction with ArcGIS software, an information system used to create maps and compile geographical information. This new software, for example, could be a critical resource in epizootology and the monitoring of threatened or endangered species. Its conservation potential is considerable.

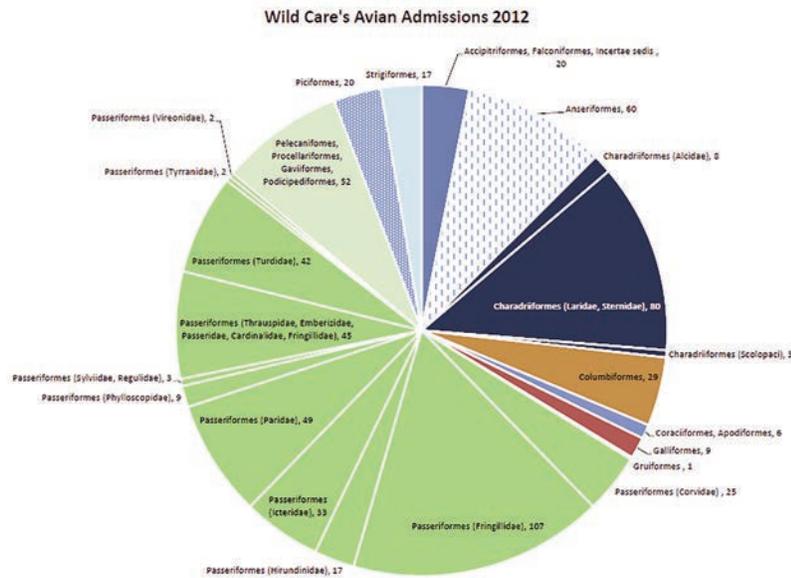
### Wild Care's Philosophy

Wild Care, Inc. is a wildlife rehabilitation center located in Eastham, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod. This is a grassroots non-profit organization, unbound by corporate or scientific agendas. As a result, the role Wild Care plays in the community is multifaceted. The staff includes scientists, conservationists, health care providers, and public educators. Its patient load fluctuates from year to year depending on the organization's public presence, but is mainly influenced by ecosystem distribution, form, and dynamics; environmental conditions; and human influence. On a daily basis Wild Care receives dilapidated and enfeebled individuals from visiting or endemic populations of wildlife. As the facility is located at a hub for migrating birds, avian admissions make up 60% of the yearly patient load. Consequently Wild Care is privy to ecological information significant to the conservation community at large.

Rehabilitators are the first responders to the public's wildlife concerns and issues. Wild Care's helpline, which fields an average of over 4000 calls a year from as far away as Louisiana and California, plays an essential role in educating the public about wildlife identification, life history, and conservation. Through the helpline, which is actively staffed with a licensed rehabilitator eight hours every day, the organization mitigates wildlife conflicts, advises private citizens on how to avoid future conflicts, determines if and when rescue is necessary for an animal, coordinates the rescue, and, when necessary, refers people to other organizations like the Marine Mammal Rescue

Wildlife Cause of Admission 2012





and Research team (MMR) of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). As humans continue to encroach on wildlife habitat, Wild Care sees an increase in incidences of birds injured by pets; collisions with power lines, windows, or cars; ingestion of heavy metals; secondary rodenticide poisoning; animals utilizing human dwellings; various types of entanglements; etc. States, municipalities, veterinary clinics, environmental and conservation organizations, and domestic animal shelters refer the public to Wild Care when a private citizen has a wildlife question or issue. It provides a service to the public at no charge and by doing so, lightens the load for state and non-governmental organizations.

Wild Care follows up on scientific studies and provides free information and specimens to interested parties whose interests coincide with Wild Care's mission. When appropriate, it provides specimens to the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology and the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts. Wild Care recently gave the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) blood and feather samples from Common Eider to complement the USDA's work on the Wellfleet Bay Virus. For another study, it provided the USDA with deceased Double-crested Cormorants for histopathological testing for Newcastle's Disease.

Wild Care is currently in the process of working with a licensed bird bander to band certain species. On the horizon, it hopes to collaborate with a local organization to data tag the seabirds it releases. All the information gathered from these activities provides valuable data about the survivability of rehabilitated animals and at the same time helps Wild Care develop treatment plans for the animals in its care.

The main purpose of Wild Care, however, is to provide veterinary assistance to wildlife and to maintain a place where animals can recover. Regardless of how common the species, the goal is to ultimately return each individual to the wild capable of survival and able to contribute to the breeding population. Citizens, scientists, and conservationists alike often question Wild Care's philosophy. The argument made most often is that wildlife rehabilitation intrudes on the natural biological and ecological process and is therefore intrinsically unnatural or "wrong." This argument would be valid if the overwhelming majority of patients were not admitted to Wild Care because of negative human influence. Car strikes, window strikes, attacks from domestic animals, projectiles, toxins, nest/habitat disturbance, fishing gear and other foreign objects, inappropriate human possession, and animal cruelty cases accounted for 50% of our 2012 patient load. This number is not inflated by cases that have suspected but unproven or unobserved human influence. Only 11% of Wild Care's patients are admitted for naturally occurring maladaptations or malignancies.

Wild Care believes that every native bird it treats represents the biology of that species as a whole. This knowledge can only contribute to a better understanding of species populations. Especially when dealing with endangered or threatened species, whose populations have reached critically low levels, rehabilitators have the potential to make a measurably positive impact in conserving the species. Like the King Eider that survived 16 years after an oil spill, for a Red-tailed Hawk that ingested a rodenticide, a Northern Gannet entangled in fishing gear, a Gray Catbird that struck a window, or a Common Loon suffering from lead poisoning, Wild Care has an opportunity to make a positive individual impact, while also contributing to the success of their species. Though most of the species treated here are not in immediate threat of extinction, Wild Care believes it is responsible for mitigating the negative effects of an increasing human population whenever possible. Wild Care aims also to spread awareness and be a force of change, because, after all, the animals themselves have difficulty co-existing with us.

Wild Care, Inc. is open 7 days a week from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. throughout the year with extended summer hours. It is located on Cape Cod at 10 Smith Lane, Eastham, MA 02642. If you find an injured, orphaned, or sick animal, please call our emergency hotline at 508-240-2255. Visit <http://www.wildcarecapecod.org> for more information. 🐦



Stephanie Ellis examining a Brown Pelican at Wild Care. Photograph courtesy of Wild Care.

*Alexandra Mueller* grew up overseas and is a Cape Cod “wash-ashore.” As a child, she fostered an affinity for animals and wildlife, giving her parents more than a few gray hairs by filling entire rolls of film with pictures of chickens and goats. While attending the University of Mary Washington, she interned at Wild Care Inc. and the Wildlife Center of Virginia, where she developed a severe case of bird-geek-itis. She graduated in 2009 with a degree in Environmental Science, concentrating on Biology and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Since May 2010, Alexandra has been working full-time at Wild Care as a Massachusetts Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator.

*Stephanie Ellis* is the Executive Director at Wild Care, Inc. She is a native of Massachusetts and a graduate of UMass Boston with degrees in Psychology, BioBehavior, and Business Management. Having dedicated her life to the wildlife rehabilitation and avian conservation fields, Stephanie first worked at the New England Wildlife Center as an Assistant Wildlife Rehabilitator and then joined the staff of the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary as Seasonal Ornithologist and Naturalist. For the past five years she has been in California. While there, Stephanie was Director of Animal Care at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley in San Jose, where she developed veterinary protocol for 4,000 animals annually. She also worked at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory as Outreach Director and served on the Board of Directors for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society. Stephanie is a member of the Nuttall Ornithological Club. She can be reached at [sellis@wildcarecapecod.org](mailto:sellis@wildcarecapecod.org).



COURTING COMMON MERGANSERS BY DAVID LARSON

# Status and Conservation of Purple Martins in Massachusetts

*Richard Lombard*

There is a unique relationship between people and the Purple Martin (*Progne subis*). The eastern U.S. population of this species has become totally dependent on human-supplied housing. Without continued human stewardship, the eastern population will likely disappear from New England. According to the State of the Birds report published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society in 2011, Purple Martin breeding activity declined by more than 50% between 1979 and 2009.

## Overview of Purple Martin Life History

The Purple Martin is the largest member of the Hirundinidae, or swallow family. It is an aerial insectivore foraging at elevations as high as 500 feet and occasionally will capture prey by hawking from its nest site but it is rarely observed on the ground except during mating season to collect nest material. There are three subspecies of Purple Martin. The one that ranges east of the Rocky Mountains and into New England is *Progne subis subis*, a colonial nester. Purple Martins prefer open lowlands, typically near bodies of water, and in Massachusetts they are now limited to coastal and near-coastal regions. They winter in central South American lowlands from eastern Bolivia to southern Brazil and rarely in northern Argentina. Purple Martins return between April and May to breed in New England.

*Progne subis subis* measures about 19 cm (7.5 inches) in length with an average weight of 55 grams (1.9 ounces). The species is sexually dimorphic. The adult male is uniformly iridescent purple; the female varies from purple to shades of gray. Purple Martins live from two to five years in the wild. Males begin the nest building in suitable cavities, but the females take over and gather most of the nest material, such as pine needles, twigs, bark, and dry grass; they often construct a layer of mud near the entrance to prevent eggs from rolling out. Nest building can be a slow process taking as long as three to four weeks to complete. The female lays from two to seven white eggs, usually one per day. Eggs are incubated for about fifteen days. During incubation the male collects fresh leaves from nearby shrubs to line the nest. The reason for leaf lining is unknown but it could act to deter nest parasites and provide insulation. The nestling phase lasts from twenty-six to thirty-two days. After fledging, the parents continue to feed the young for up to two weeks.

Typically, the adults, referred to as “scouts” or as ASY (after-second-year martins), are the first to return and search for the best nest sites, frequently the same colony used the previous year. Subadults, those martins that fledged the previous year, often appear four to six weeks later than the adults and are usually the ones to occupy new colony sites. Though, most ASY birds return to the same colony year after year showing strong nest fidelity, only about one to five percent of fledglings or second-year martins return to their natal colony to breed.

In the East, Purple Martins are typically found in urban and suburban habitats as our eastern subspecies has become totally dependent on human-supplied housing. This shift away from natural nesting cavities had already begun before the arrival of European settlers; Native Americans often hung hollowed gourds to attract martins to nest near their villages. This practice was likely undertaken for insect control and to employ martins as sentinels since they tend to mob perceived predators and strangers. In return, the martins benefited from a reliable supply of artificial nest cavities—generally larger and more abundant than natural cavities—and a reduced exposure to natural predators, which must also have led to greater reproductive success. European settlers continued this endeavor for many of the same reasons, eventually completing the nesting behavioral shift in the eastern population of Purple Martins.

### **Reasons for Purple Martin Decline in Region**

The Purple Martin faces stiff competition for nest sites from House Sparrows and European Starlings. These invasive species, introduced to North America from Europe in the nineteenth century, have been major factors in the Purple Martin's decline. Starlings present the greater threat to martin nests, but both competitors will destroy martin eggs and kill nestlings as well as adults. Additional likely reasons for the decline of Purple Martins in Massachusetts include habitat loss, an insufficient amount of human-supplied housing, and a climatic trend to extended cold and rainy spring weather in a region already close to the species' northeastern range limit.

Due in part to its exclusively insectivorous diet, the Purple Martin is particularly vulnerable to cold and rain, especially early in the breeding season, and both adults and nestlings are at a high risk of succumbing to extended periods of inclement weather. Purple Martins can survive for only about three days without food and will not even attempt to forage at temperatures below 50° F. They will instead huddle together in nest housing to conserve body temperature. Climate forecasts for Massachusetts and the region predict further hardship with more precipitation early in the nesting season and hotter and drier summers.

Its reliance on human-supplied housing may be another factor responsible for the martin's decline in the region. Not many people are willing to become martin landlords given the challenges of establishing a colony. In order to succeed, an aspiring landlord needs to have a thorough understanding of martin nesting behavior and be persistent and tolerant of failure in initial colony attempts.

### **Purple Martin Conservation Status in Massachusetts and Regionally**

According to *The State of the Birds*, between 1979 (Atlas 1) and 2011 (Atlas 2) the number of breeding blocks in Massachusetts with evidence of *Progne subis subis* breeding activity had declined by 50%. Consequently, the percentage of area in the state where *Progne subis subis* breeding occurred declined from 2.9% to only 1.5% during the same period. Table 1 highlights the decrease in number of breeding blocks and breeding area between Atlas 1 and Atlas 2, indicating a strong decline in Purple Martin breeding in the Massachusetts. As a result, the Massachusetts Audubon Society has red-listed this species, indicating conservation action is urgent. Unfortunately, conservation efforts toward martin recovery have been weak at best.

**Table 1. Purple Martin Breeding Results from Mass Audubon Atlas 1 & Atlas 2**

	<u>Total # Breeding Blocks</u>	<u>% Area of State Occupied</u>
Atlas 1 (1974-79)	24	2.9
Atlas 2 (2007-11)	12	1.5
Decline between Atlas 1 & 2	50%	1.4%

In Massachusetts, the Purple Martin has its strongest showing in the southeast portion of the state, where in 2012 there were ten active colonies. On the North Shore, there were two active colonies at the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge (PRNWR). Given such a small martin population with an extreme sensitivity to extended cold, rainy weather, there is a significant risk of a catastrophic regional loss from a storm event in Massachusetts.

As inland colony attempts have lately tended to be unsuccessful, it appears that the Purple Martin is now relegated to coastal or near-coastal areas. There have been a few recent attempts to establish additional colonies along the North Shore but none have attracted martin colonization to date. Purple Martins are finicky about nest housing and colony location and they do not readily colonize even an apparently suitable location, especially in a region with a small population and without an active colony nearby.

Using International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) protocol, NatureServe, a non-profit conservation organization, ranks the conservation status of species at a sub-national, or state level and provides information on species conservation status at regional and local levels. In Massachusetts *P. s. subis* is ranked by NatureServe as “critically imperiled” as it is also in New Hampshire, Connecticut, and the Canadian Maritime Provinces.

New Hampshire and Connecticut have taken the initial action of listing the martin as a *species of special concern*. From 1951 to 2005 New Hampshire witnessed a decrease in the number of active colonies from thirty to only ten. The Fish and Game Department of the State of New Hampshire has included Purple Martin conservation in its *Wildlife Action Plan*, published in 2005. This plan reports that aerial insectivores, including the Purple Martin, have been experiencing widespread declines likely due to a combination of pesticide exposure, loss of habitat, and climate change. The *Wildlife Action Plan* also points out that martins have been declining for more than two decades over their entire New England range.

To gain a better understanding of the population status of the Purple Martin and other swallows that breed in New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and the New Hampshire Audubon Society have established the *Swallow CORE Program*, which requests that residents register their colonies with the *Swallow Colony Registry* managed by the New Hampshire Audubon Society. This program has

a cadre of volunteers who focus on collecting data regarding the distribution and abundance of colonial nesting swallow species, including the Purple Martin.

The State of Connecticut also requests landlords with active Purple Martin colonies in Connecticut to contact the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Wildlife Division as well as the Purple Martin Conservation Association.

Despite the bleak outlook for the Purple Martin population in Massachusetts, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program has failed to add Purple Martin to the state list of rare species even at the entry level of *species of special concern*. Listing would be a good first step for establishing a credible conservation program in the Commonwealth. A status of *species of special concern* means that the species has been documented by biological research and inventory to have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked, or occurring in such small numbers, or with such a restricted distribution, or specialized habitat requirements, that it could easily become *threatened* within Massachusetts (321 CMR 10.03). Such listing would certainly be appropriate for the Purple Martin in Massachusetts. It should be noted that the State of Connecticut lists the martin as *threatened*; in New Hampshire and Maine it is considered a *species of concern*.

### Salisbury Beach Potential

The Salisbury Beach State Reservation, situated in Salisbury, Massachusetts, and managed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, is a promising location for Purple Martin colonization on the North Shore. One key factor is its close proximity to the active martin colonies at the PRNWR. The park is situated along water with good forage habitat, level terrain and few aerial obstructions to hamper the flight of this aerial insectivore (Figure 1). The presence of human activity, including structures, such as the Interpretive Center, Park



Figure 1. Open area at Salisbury Beach State Reservation; photograph by the author

Headquarters building, the State Police horse barn, the official visitor contact station, restroom facilities, campground, and pavilion area provide confirmation of human tenancy, enhancing the site's appeal to martins. This location should attract sub adults and possibly adult martins from PRNWR, as well as martins migrating north along the Atlantic coast toward New Hampshire, Maine and the Maritime Provinces.

Greater awareness of the plight of the Purple Martin in New England is needed to aid in the recovery and resurgence of this species in Massachusetts and throughout New England. The scattered martin colonies in southeast Massachusetts and at the PRNWR are critical to local and regional recovery. The PRNWR colonies could serve as an important core population not only for colonization at Salisbury Beach State Reservation and elsewhere in northeast Massachusetts and coastal New Hampshire.

The State of Connecticut has sponsored several successful colonies at Hammonasset Beach State Park in the town of Madison. The 2012 nesting season produced 180 fledglings. Figure 2 shows an active martin colony at Hammonasset Beach State Park. With time and similar efforts and dedication, Salisbury Beach State Reservation should also support an energetic martin colony that will delight park visitors and campers for generations. 



Figure 2. Active colony at Hammonasset Beach State Park; photograph by R. Marr

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**Richard Lombard** is a resident of Groveland, Massachusetts, where he has participated in numerous local conservation efforts and currently serves on the town's Board of Health. Focusing on the conservation of grassland and shrubland species, he monitors and maintains nest boxes at several conservation areas. He frequently leads AMC walks through local conservation land and is a stream monitor for the Parker River Clean Water Association. When not wandering through woodlands and fields, he enjoys taking canoe trips to wilder areas and has had the opportunity to paddle down the Canning River through the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Richard has a keen interest in and concern for the Purple Martin and is optimistic about its recovery along the North Shore of Massachusetts.



HORNED GREBE BY SANDY SELESKY

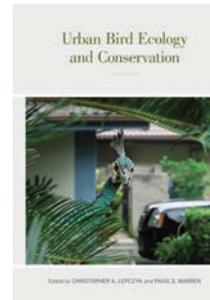
## ABOUT BOOKS

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### Urban Birdin’

*Mark Lynch*

*Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation*. Edited by Christopher A. Lepczyk and Paige S. Warren. 2012. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.



“One thing is sure. The earth is now more cultivated and developed than ever before. There is more farming with pure force, swamps are drying up, and cities are springing up on unprecedented scale. We’ve become a burden to our planet. Resources are becoming scarce, and soon nature will no longer be able to satisfy our needs.” Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus, Roman theologian, 200 AD.

“Fall is my favorite season in Los Angeles, watching the birds change color and fall from the skies.” David Letterman.

Birding in cities is an experience that can be challenging, frustrating, and exciting. You have to deal with gridlocked traffic and parking problems. One advantage is that urban public transportation can be used if available, something not possible if you want to bird Quabbin. People are everywhere in cities and the birder is rarely alone. The excessive noise levels from the cars, buses, and construction can be distracting and actually hinder listening for bird songs and calls. The list of birds found in an urban environment is certainly different from the list of species in suburban and rural areas. Many species are tough to find in large cities but other species are abundant only in urban locations. Rock Pigeons are easy to see in most cities but not in densely forested locations. Red-eyed Vireos are common nesters in our New England forests, but extremely uncommon as a nesting species in urban locations. There may be a long list of migrant species that stop over briefly in urban green spaces, and some urban locations like Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Swan Point Cemetery in Providence, Rhode Island, are well-known spring birding destinations. But the number of species that actually nest in these green spaces is much, much smaller.

A few species of birds thrive in human made environments. We witnessed this phenomenon first hand while atlasing a number of blocks in the city of Worcester. We found Starlings nesting in streetlights, in the hollow pipes of road signs, and even in holes in cheaply made school walls. Rock pigeons nested under particular overpasses or in parking garages. House Sparrows were found nesting in any crevice or small open pipe available. These are introduced species that have adapted to living side by side with dense populations of humanity, and they can be found in many large cities around the world. These same species nest throughout most of the year here in southern New England. For them and a few others, there are advantages to living in a

city. In winter, the temperatures are typically a few degrees warmer than in nearby forested areas, and large spaces are cleared of snow. Small ponds and waterways in cities can remain open well into winter due to thermal pollution, and those spots are attractive to lingering waterbirds. In January, if I want to look for over-wintering Great Blue Herons in Worcester County, I first check ponds and rivers in the city of Worcester. There is also a lot of food readily available year round in the form of garbage and refuse. For birds a bit further up the food chain, species that subsist on pigeons, starlings, rats, and squirrels can find plenty to eat. It is therefore not surprising that certain species of raptors have begun to nest regularly in cities. These include Peregrine Falcons, Red-tailed Hawks, and now Cooper's Hawks. Even Eastern Screech Owls nest in parks and residential neighborhoods in cities.

There is certainly abundant anecdotal information on the differences between urban and rural bird populations, but are there ways to scientifically study and quantify the effects that cities and rapid urban growth have on bird populations? We know that cities are not great locations for many species, but which species and why? Do green spaces need to be of a certain size and composition to benefit birds? Can we create development that benefits both people and birds? These are crucial questions as humanity continues to pave over bird habitat at an alarming rate.

The ornithologists and ecologists whose papers are found in *Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation* have begun the daunting task of trying to answer these complex questions. Though urban ecology is not a new subject, the turning point for many of the researchers who contributed to this book was the 2001 publication of *Avian Ecology and Conservation in an Urbanizing World*, a collection of papers edited by Marzluff, Bowman, and Donnelly. This publication led to a 2005 conference on the subject of urban bird ecology in Atlanta, Georgia. Several of the authors from the 2001 book presented papers about "merging issues along urban/rural interfaces: linking science and society." Researchers got excited, and another full day conference on urban bird ecology was held to focus on what had been learned since 2001. The publication of the papers presented at this conference comprises the book *Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation*. The authors and editors view this book as the sequel to *Avian Ecology and Conservation in an Urbanizing World*.

Paige S. Warren and Christopher A. Lepczyk have written a fine introductory chapter titled "Beyond the Gradient: Insights from New Work in the Avian Ecology of Urbanizing Lands." This is an overview of urban bird ecology research and what has been learned up until now. The authors feel strongly that birds are the ideal study subjects to understand how the natural world is coping with and adapting to urban environments. Birds epitomize the complex relationship between people and the natural world. Many people profess to enjoy the out-of-doors yet also support the creation of environments that destroy that same natural world. Quite a number of people in cities feed birds yet live in and support places that make it hard for those birds to survive. One of the goals of urban bird ecology is to get a better understanding of these conflicting attitudes. Warren and Lepczyk also write that researchers need to look not just at breeding species, but also at the importance of urban areas as resting and feeding spots for long distant migrants. Note that for the

authors in this book the word “urban” can refer to a variety of “human dominated” habitats like city centers, suburban residential areas, and “protected lands interfacing with urban areas.” One paper even investigates the impact that seasonal tourist destinations like ski resorts have on bird assemblages.

The challenge then for the urban bird ecologist is how to scientifically analyze this complex of habitats in a way that makes sense and allows for a comparison to other cities. Studies in this book were conducted in California, Arizona, Michigan, Ohio, Finland, western Mexico, Florida, and North and South Carolina.

The editors have grouped the papers under four headings. I cannot possibly summarize each paper in this book, so I will mention only a few points made in each of the four sections. Part One is titled “Mechanisms and Urban-Rural Gradients.” Gradient analysis is an empirical analytical method used to look at the abundance of a variety of species across several dimensions. These dimensions may include density of buildings, plant composition of urban green spaces, presence or absence of water, and so forth. For example, a few researchers looked at what species thrived and which did not in areas of Amur Honeysuckle, an invasive species common in urban environments. Northern Cardinals thrive in this thick monoculture understory, but Acadian Flycatchers do not. A few authors developed lists of birds that are either “urban adapters” or “urban avoiders”. The former seem to survive and possibly thrive in urban environments but the latter disappear at the first sign of urbanization. One goal of this research is to learn how to hold onto the small populations of urban avoiders that may remain in a city before they completely vanish. In most cities there are lots of birds but only a few species. In the chapter “From Forests to Cities: Effects of Urbanization on Tropical Birds” by Ian MacGregor-Fors, Lorena Morales-Perez, and Jorge E. Schondube the authors look at the relationship of bird populations to urbanization in a city in Mexico. They found that though bird diversity is affected negatively by increased urbanization, bird abundance of certain species like House Sparrow and Rock Pigeon is positively related. In their study city, bird species abundance was positively related to greater and higher tree and herbaceous cover, building height, and high-income areas and negatively related to human activity.

“Does Nest Predation Shape Urban Bird Communities?” by Christine M. Stacey and Scott K. Robinson discusses their findings that small-bodied, open-cup nesters are almost entirely absent from urban areas. They suggest this absence may be due to the presence of nest predators.

“Among small-bodied individuals that do thrive in urban environments, the vast majority nest in cavities or other enclosed places. Even open cup nesters, such as the House Finch, usually place their nests in enclosed places in human structures in urban environments.” In urban environments the small bodied species were most abundant in the largest tracts of forest. Furthermore, urban adaptive species appear to be those that actively protect themselves against nest predators. They would include species like Northern Mockingbird.

The goal of many of the scientists in this section of the book is to tease out those elements of an urban landscape that support the greatest diversity of birdlife. Factors

that may be crucial to hosting a large variety of species in an urban setting include the size and location of the green space, composition of local vegetation, winter micro-climates, the presence of supplemental food resources including feeders, the number and variety of predators, and density of brood parasites. These studies are still in their infancy, and judging by the articles in this section of the book it is still difficult to understand the interplay of all the variables and make comparisons from one city to the next. It may be that every urban environment is a unique collection of all these factors and therefore bird conservation strategies will vary dramatically from one city to the next.

“A great city tends to spread out and lay bare to the public view in a massive manner all the characters and traits which are ordinarily obscured and suppressed in smaller communities. The city, in short, shows the good and evil in human nature in excess. It is this fact, more than any other which justifies the view that would make of the city a laboratory or clinic in which human nature and social processes may be most conveniently and profitably studied.” Robert E. Park

Part Two of *Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation* is titled “Citizen Science and Demography of Urban Birds”. Each paper in this section describes a monitoring project staffed by educated volunteers, typically birders. To gather the data necessary, these studies needed repeated, systematic visits to numerous sites in an urban setting and had to rely on unpaid but skilled observers. No single researcher could possibly gather all the data needed. The variety of species studied in these papers is fascinating. Populations of Painted Buntings were carefully tracked in cities in North and South Carolina. Because this species often visits feeders, volunteer birders were considered perfect project monitors as they could easily interact with the feeder owners and likely had feeders themselves. The Tucson Bird Count (TBC) collected citywide data on Abert’s Towhee populations. Greater Roadrunner numbers were tracked and compared for sites in urban and suburban Arizona. In another study, a good number of trained volunteers were needed to gather data on the effects that urban fragmentation of habitat, park size, and the presence of recreational trails have on the reproductive success of Spotted Towhees. Another study looked at post-fledging movement between isolated habitat patches in Seattle, Washington. The species monitored included American Robin, Swainson’s Thrush, Spotted Towhee, and Song Sparrow.

These monitoring schemes were inspired by well-known long-running volunteer based projects like Breeding Bird Surveys and Christmas Bird Counts. But the newer short-term projects are more sophisticated in the data they collect and are more narrowly focused on one or just a few species. Judging by the papers in *Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation*, citizen science has come of age, and trained observers like birders are being utilized as sophisticated data collectors across the nation. I only wish there had been a paper that included some project from Boston, Worcester, or Providence.

“There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before.” Robert Lynd in *The Blue Lion and Other Essays*, 1923

Part Three of *Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation* is titled “Human-Avian Interactions and Planning”. This is an important and practical section of the book and should be read by anyone wishing to work to improve the urban environment for birds. The first paper is titled “Avian Conservation in Urban Environments: What Do Ecologists Bring to the Table” by James R. Miller. This is a critical review of past papers on urban bird ecology and includes suggestions on how to write up research in the future. Miller starts by emphasizing the importance of publishing future research but notes that researchers need to better emphasize the practical applications of their research and develop stronger connections between research and practice. In effect, Miller is saying: “You have the data, now what are you going to do with that information?” Miller continues with a number of suggestions on how to better present data in papers so that people in the design and build communities can read it and work with those findings.

Immediately following this, is Mark Hostettler’s “How Biologists Can Involve Developers, Planners and Policymakers in Urban Avian Conservation.” This is based on what has been learned by the University of Florida’s academic group the Program for Resource Efficient Communities (PREC). Hostettler outlines some of the PREC’s techniques to better engage the design and build communities to “create more resource-efficient, bird friendly residential neighborhoods.” Titles of some of the bullet points discussed fully in this paper include “Partner with a Developer to Create a Model Community,” “All Individuals Must Have Understanding and Buy-in,” “Steps For Partnership to Conserve and Restore Habitats,” and how to “Reach Out to Planners and Policymakers.” Typically birders helplessly bemoan the destruction of a chunk of habitat to put up yet another planned community or strip mall. These papers suggest that instead of taking an adversarial stance, it could be more productive to create either an academic or a conservation organization based group that actively partners with developers to reach more bird-friendly solutions. The development is going to occur no matter what, so why not try to work toward a solution that is more environmentally friendly and that is appealing to all groups?

Other papers in this section look at the question of who feeds birds in cities. Do they come from certain socio-economic backgrounds? What kinds of food do they feed birds? How do these urban bird feeders feel about keeping cats indoors? Do urban people who feed birds in cities in different parts of the country fit in the same demographic categories? These are fascinating questions and they underscore that urban bird ecology is always about the human-bird interface.

Part Four, “Future Directions” consists of only one paper by John M. Marzluff entitled “Urban Evolutionary Ecology,” which speculates on which birds will survive in future urban environments. Additionally, there are two other papers available only on-line.

Books that are compendiums of research papers are typically tough reading particularly for a non-university affiliated birder. *Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation* is different. Though the papers contained in the book are scientific papers and not non-fiction prose, the ideas are of interest to all of us who live or bird in cities. Furthermore, the research presented in *Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation* is not just a collection of depressing findings about how poorly many species are doing in cities. A number of the authors address how we can begin to improve our urban environments for birds and how birders can help in that effort. After reading *Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation*, I found myself thinking of different monitoring projects we could do in my home urban environment and what can be done to improve bird species richness locally. The papers in *Urban Bird Ecology and Conservation* make it clear that though there is still a lot to be learned about birds and cities, there is also much that can be done now to conserve urban bird populations. 🐦

“There are eight million stories in the naked city. This has been one of them.” The Narrator in the film *The Naked City*, 1948

**LITERATURE CITED:**

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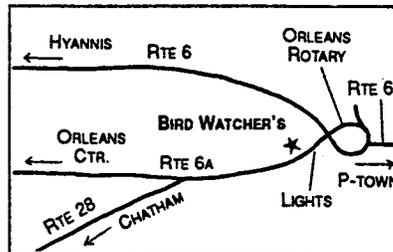
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## BIRD SIGHTINGS

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### November/December 2012

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

November was cooler than is typical, with below normal temperature on 19 days. The high was 66° on November 12 with a low of 30° on November 30. Rainfall totaled only 1.01 inches in Boston, nearly three inches below normal for November with measurable amounts on just five days. On November 7–8 a nor'easter dropped 0.4" of snow in Boston but hammered parts of central and southeastern Massachusetts with over 5 inches. Wind gusts of over 50 mph were reported on parts of Cape Cod, and Cuttyhunk reported a gust of 76 mph. Many areas experienced power outages, and coastal flooding was noted in Chatham and Quincy and on Nantucket.

December was pleasant with above normal temperatures. The high of 60 ° occurred on December 7, and another eight days had readings above 50 °. Rainfall totaled 5.93 inches in Boston, 3.78 inches above normal but snowfall was below normal with only 3.4 inches, 5 inches below average. The first winter storm of the season arrived late in the month and dropped up to eight inches of snow in western Massachusetts but just rain in eastern areas. Along the coast, high winds caused flood warnings for Barnstable, Bristol, Plymouth, Norfolk and Suffolk counties. The weather did cooperate for all the Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs), and none had to be postponed.

*R. Stymeist*

#### WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

Hurricane Sandy blew through Massachusetts in the last days of October bringing some impressive sightings at the end of the month, but it was not until November that the full effect was seen. The two **Northern Lapwings** discovered on Nantucket on October 31 continued, and two additional birds were discovered in Plymouth County, one at the Cumberland Farm fields in Middleboro and the other at the state farm in Bridgewater. These sightings were only part of a major fallout of lapwings along the east coast of North America. Prior to Sandy, there were only two previous records of lapwings in the state.

**Brown Pelicans** are rare in Massachusetts, but Sandy brought them in numbers as well. Most were on Cape Cod and its adjacent islands, but since sightings in separate areas may have involved the same bird(s), we cannot know the exact total of individuals seen. The number, however, was clearly impressive. Several appeared to be in distress, and at least three were taken to licensed wildlife rehabilitators. One pelican in Eastham lingered through November 24, but the others disappeared after November 4.

Other apparent victims of the storm included a Red Phalarope discovered dead in South Hadley and a Black-legged Kittiwake found dead in Upton, both on November 1. Other kittiwakes making rare inland forays were luckier and included one at Quabbin Park and another at Turners Falls, both on November 5.

A week after the storm, on November 7 and 8, an impressive movement of Dovekies occurred in at least two locations. At Andrew's Point in Rockport Rick Heil tallied 3,470 birds, describing the event,

"The entire flight occurred between 0730 and 1045 hrs., and was at times intense, peaking with more than 1500 passing by between 0900 and 0930, including many

close flocks of up to seventy birds. I had hopes that this rate would continue for an extended time, but after 1000 hrs. the flight tailed off dramatically, and not a single bird was recorded after 1045 hrs, in the ensuing 3.5 hours! Although irruptive seabird species are largely influenced by prey availability or lack thereof, there is no doubt that weather systems also play an impactful role in their dispersal. I suspect that Hurricane Sandy may have played a part in the appearance of these birds, perhaps displacing them at the time, putting them now into a more proximal position to be seen from shore during the current Nor'easter."

At Race Point in Provincetown Blair Nikula tallied 1400 Dovekies on November 7. On November 8 he spent the morning at First Encounter Beach in Eastham where he described the Dovekie flight,

"Dovekies were already on the move when I arrived a bit before 6:30 and continued at a steady pace through late morning, finally tapering off about 11:00. . . . probably missed many more due to the poor visibility the first half of the morning; the best flight of this species I've ever witnessed."

A **Ross's Goose**, initially discovered at the end of October, remained through December 20. An unusual number of **Cackling Geese** were reported during the period. They are now annual in western Massachusetts but are less regular in the eastern part of the state so birds in Concord and Dighton were particularly noteworthy.

**Pacific Loons** were reported from three locations. Two loons sighted at Plum Island and thought to be **Arctic Loons** were conservatively reported as Arctic/Pacific Loons, as MARC has accepted no records of Arctic Loon. **Western Grebes** are very rare in the state, but during this period an astonishing four were sighted at Plum Island. A single Western Grebe was seen in Orleans. A **Black-browed Albatross** was photographed 50 miles southeast of Point Judith, Rhode Island, a scant four miles into Massachusetts's waters. A **Black-capped Petrel** was sighted at Andrew's Point in Rockport on December 21. There have been only a handful of previous sightings of this species, one of which was by the same observer at the same location on October 25, 2005.

A **Little Egret** was discovered in Barnstable on November 21; initially assumed to be a Snowy Egret, it was later photographed and identified. Presumably the same bird was sighted at other locations on Cape Cod through December 26. A **White Ibis** was reported from Rhode Island on November 10–13, and on November 14 presumably the same bird was found at Allen's Pond in South Dartmouth, where it stayed only through November 15.

A **Sabine's Gull** seen from First Encounter Beach in Eastham may have been a late storm waif. **Black-headed** and **Little gulls** were well reported. Eight **Atlantic Puffins** at First Encounter Beach were unusual for numbers and location.

*M. Rines*

<b>Greater White-fronted Goose</b>				11/24	Swansea	525	J. Sweeney
12/9-11	Holden	1	M. Lynch + v.o.	12/5	Nahant	500	L. Pivacek
12/20-24	Westminster	1	T. Pirro + v.o.	Black Brant			
<b>Snow Goose</b>				11/2	Plymouth	1 ph	R. Bowes
12/1	Southampton	50	D. Schell	<b>Cackling Goose</b>			
12/2	Templeton	17	J. Williams	11/3	Sheffield	1	J. Drucker
12/22	Southwick	30	S. Kellogg	11/5	Concord	2	D. Sibley
12/30	Greenfield	80	CBC	11/8	Turners Falls	1	Z. Jakub
<b>Ross's Goose</b>				11/14	Amherst	1	J. Drucker
11/1-12/20	Sharon	1	v.o.	11/22	Northampton	1	L. Therrien
<b>Brant</b>				12/1-4	Dighton	3 ph	M. Iliff + v.o.
11/1	Wollaston	45	P. Peterson	12/11	Amherst	1	K. Yakola
11/3	Gardner	8	T. Pirro	12/15	Lee	1	T. Collins#
11/4	Barre Falls	5	B. Kamp	Mute Swan			
11/23	WBWS	200	G. d'Entremont	11/4	Nantucket	40	K. Blackshaw#

Mute Swan (continued)				12/15	Lee	2	T. Collins#
11/25	Framingham	47	N. Paulson	12/31	Nantucket	6	G. d'Entremont#
12/22	Westboro	86	M. Lynch#		Ring-necked Duck		
12/29	Framingham	89	G. Jones	11/1	Cambr. (F.P.)	203	B. Miller
12/29	Nantucket	37	G. d'Entremont#	11/10	Pittsfield	1700	S. Kellogg#
Wood Duck				11/26	Groveland	400	K. Elwell
11/2	W. Roxbury (MP)	8	M. Kaufman	12/2	Brewster	250	D. Clapp#
11/4	Squantum	8	R. Donovan	12/8	Waltham	200	J. Forbes
11/12	GMNWR	13	A. Bragg#	12/27	Haverhill	325	S. Mirick
12/15	Chicopee	5	T. Swochak	12/31	Wrentham	330	E. LoPresti
Gadwall					Greater Scaup		
11/18	Northampton	3	J. Drucker	11/5	Lunenburg	8	T. Pirro
11/20	Plymouth	36	R. Bowes	11/16	Clinton	70	T. Pirro
12/15	Weston	4	J. Forbes#	11/17	Wachusett Res.	85	M. Lynch#
12/15	Gloucester	14	BBC (R. Petersen)	12/5	Nahant	300	L. Pivacek
12/16	Hadley	4	S. Surner#	12/13	Plymouth	192	I. Davies
12/20	P.I.	163	D. Chickering	12/17	Rockport (A.P.)	108	R. Heil
12/27	Wrentham	4	E. LoPresti	12/31	Nantucket	600	G. d'Entremont#
Eurasian Wigeon					Lesser Scaup		
11/thr	P.I.	2	M. Weber	11/5	S. Quabbin	8	L. Therrien
12/thr	Marstons Mills	2	v.o.	11/15	Westport	20	J. Hoye#
12/thr	Chatham	2	T. Dorazio#	11/17	Pembroke	43	G. d'Entremont#
12/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	N. Paulson	12/5	Nahant	100	L. Pivacek
12/20-31	Falmouth	1	G. Hirth#	12/16	Wrentham	60	E. LoPresti
12/23	Nantucket	4	V. Laux	12/31	Nantucket	17	G. d'Entremont#
American Wigeon					King Eider		
11/12	P.I.	200	C. Berthoud	11/21	Gloucester	1 m	MAS (B. Gette)
11/24	Swansea	130	J. Sweeney		Common Eider		
12/2	Nantucket	125	K. Blackshaw#	11/10	Fairhaven	48	M. Lynch#
12/8	Waltham	25	J. Forbes	11/10	off Monomoy	25,000	BBC Pelagic
12/16	Wrentham	33	E. LoPresti	12/2	P'town	2300	S. Perkins#
12/31	Nantucket	62	G. d'Entremont#	12/2	Wellfleet	3000	M. Faherty
Eurasian Wigeon X American Wigeon thr	Newton	1 ph	E. Dahl + v.o.	12/29	Nant. Sound	1250	G. d'Entremont#
American Black Duck					Harlequin Duck		
12/11	P.I.	2750	R. Heil	11/4	Acoaxet	4	E. Nielsen
12/27	Barnstable	1250	P. Trimble	11/4	Sandwich	7	P. Kyle
Blue-winged Teal				11/7, 12/27	Rockport (A.P.)	7, 228	R. Heil
11/3	P.I.	1	A. Gurka#	11/10	Manomet	8	K. Doyon
11/11	Sudbury	2	G. Long	11/15	Westport	12	J. Hoye#
11/19	GMNWR	1	A. Bragg	11/23	Cuttyhunk	6	I. Davies
12/8	Marston's Mills	1	G. d'Entremont	11/24	Scituate	10	W. + A. Childs
Northern Shoveler				12/9	Duxbury B.	4	R. Bowes
11/2	P.I.	19	D. Chickering#	12/29	Nantucket	2	G. d'Entremont#
11/16	Longmeadow	3	M. Moore		Surf Scoter		
11/22	Concord	5	S. Perkins	11/3	P'town	700	S. Arena
11/28	Jamaica Plain	3	T. Bradford	11/5	Lunenburg	10	T. Pirro
12/8	Longmeadow	3	M. Moore	11/10	Nant. Sound	2185	BBC Pelagic
12/20	GMNWR	5	W. Martins	11/10	Fairhaven	106	M. Lynch#
12/21	Arlington Res.	3	L. Ramras	11/25	P.I.	27	J. Trimble
Northern Pintail thr	P.I.	400 max	v.o.	12/29	Nant. Sound	4000	G. d'Entremont#
11/1	GMNWR	53	S. Perkins	11/4	P'town	800	B. Nikula
11/17	Westport	60	J. Hoye#	11/5	S. Quabbin	12	L. Therrien
11/19	Easthampton	2	L. Therrien	11/30	Revere B.	900	P. Peterson
11/19	Northampton	2	L. Therrien	12/2	P'town	1200	S. Perkins#
12/22	Westfield	2	T. Swochak	12/31	Nantucket	5000	G. d'Entremont#
Green-winged Teal					Black Scoter		
11/1-12/3	GMNWR	225 max	v.o.	11/4	Acton	28	D. Swain#
11/1-12/11	P.I.	250 max	v.o.	11/5	Brimfield	120	I. Lynch
11/17	Wachusett Res.	29	M. Lynch#	11/5	S. Quabbin	783	L. Therrien
11/30	E. Boston	29	P. Peterson	11/7	Rockport (A.P.)	770	R. Heil
12/15	Pittsfield (Pont.)	14	N. Mole	11/7	Manomet	391	A. Kneidel#
Eurasian Green-winged Teal				12/31	Nantucket	300	G. d'Entremont#
12/15	Weston	1	J. Forbes#		Long-tailed Duck		
Canvasback thr	Cambr. (F.P.)	15 max	v.o.	11/2	Pittsfield (Onota)	9	G. Hurley
12/31	Nantucket	15	G. d'Entremont#	11/3	P.I.	22	S. Grinley#
Redhead				11/5	S. Quabbin	7	L. Therrien
12/thr	Chestnut Hill	5	v.o.	11/7	Rockport (A.P.)	200	R. Heil
12/1-23	Westboro	3	v.o.	11/10	Nant. Sound	625	BBC Pelagic
12/5-31	Falmouth	5	G. Hirth#	12/11	P.I.	180	R. Heil
12/11-31	Eastham	1	M. Faherty	12/23	Nantucket	10,000	V. Laux
					Bufflehead		
				11/3	Duxbury B.	100	R. Bowes

Bufflehead (continued)				11/7	Rockport (A.P.)	67	R. Heil
11/6	Squantum	120	P. Peterson	11/10	Nant. Sound	37	BBC Pelagic
11/10	Fairhaven	332	M. Lynch#	11/20	P.I.	220	T. Wetmore
11/11	Wachusett Res.	30	R. Langer	12/17	Rockport (A.P.)	183	R. Heil
11/26	Nahant	300	L. Pivacek	<b>Pacific Loon</b>			
12/15	Mashpee	790	M. Iliff	11/26	Squantum	1	R. Donovan
Common Goldeneye				12/5	Wellfleet	1	M. Faherty
12/8	Boylston	29	M. Lynch#	12/8	P'town H.	1	J. Young#
12/16	Lowell	40	A. Gaudet	<b>Arctic/Pacific Loon</b>			
12/17	Rockport (A.P.)	37	R. Heil	11/27	P.I.	2	J. Berry + v.o.
12/22	Wachusett Res.	35	G. Gove#	Common Loon			
12/26	Newbypt H.	30	MAS (B. Gette)	11/1	Westport	42	M. Iliff
12/29	Northfield	85	J. Smith	11/7	Manomet	40	A. Kneidel#
Barrow's Goldeneye				11/10	Nant. Sound	154	BBC Pelagic
11/25-12/31	Wachusett Res.	1 f	v.o.	11/11	P.I.	100	T. Wetmore
12/12	Gloucester (B.R.)	2 m	MAS (B. Gette)	11/11	P'town	25	B. Nikula
12/13	Plymouth	2	I. Davies	11/17	Clinton	8	J. Holm
12/15	Lowell	1 m	A. Gaudet	11/23	Cuttyhunk	47	I. Davies
12/29	Wellfleet H.	1	B. Nikula	11/26	S. Quabbin	8	L. Therrien
12/29	Rockport	1 m	A. Gurka#	<b>Pied-billed Grebe</b>			
12/30	Turners Falls	2	J. Smith	11/1	Cambr. (F.P.)	7	B. Miller
Common X Barrow's Goldeneye				11/4	Cheshire	9	T. Gagnon#
12/14	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	11/4	Acoaxet	7	E. Nielsen
Hooded Merganser				11/19	Westboro	9	G. Dysart
11/9	Pittsfield (Onota)	80	K. Hanson	11/22	Rehoboth	6	J. Sweeney
11/26	Groveland	150	K. Elwell	12/13	Plymouth	6	I. Davies
12/1	Natick	133	J. Normandin	12/31	Nantucket	11	G. d'Entremont#
12/3	Quabog IBA	114	M. Lynch#	<b>Horned Grebe</b>			
12/15	W. Boxford	104	T. Walker	11/1	Wollaston	77	P. Peterson
12/29	Chestnut Hill	116	J. Taylor	11/9	Pittsfield (Onota)	5	K. Hanson
12/29	Waltham	140	J. Forbes	11/10	Fairhaven	295	M. Lynch#
Common Merganser				11/22	Northampton	13	L. Therrien
11/10	Pittsfield (Pont.)	150	S. Kellogg#	11/27	P.I.	35	J. Berry
11/11	Paxton	214	M. Lynch#	12/1	S. Quabbin	15	L. Therrien
11/21	Peabody	200	D. + I. Jewell	<b>Red-necked Grebe</b>			
12/3	Quabog IBA	721	M. Lynch#	11/2	Southboro	2	K. Cronin
12/12	Cambr. (F.P.)	146	B. Miller	11/10	Pittsfield (Pont.)	16	S. Kellogg#
12/22	Southboro	249	N. Paulson	11/16	Wachusett Res.	3	T. Pirro
Red-breasted Merganser				12/4	P.I.	45	J. Berry
11/1	Wollaston	15	P. Peterson	12/15	Winthrop B.	30	R. Cressman
11/7	Rockport (A.P.)	190	R. Heil	12/29	Rockport (A.P.)	15	P. + F. Vale
11/10	Fairhaven	194	M. Lynch#	<b>Western Grebe</b>			
11/14	P'town	4600	B. Nikula	11/11	Orleans	1	C. Goodrich
12/11	P.I.	240	R. Heil	11/23-12/31	P.I.	2-4	J. Shack + v.o.
Ruddy Duck				<b>Black-browed Albatross</b>			
thr	Cambr. (F.P.)	153 max	v.o.	12/2	SW of Nant.	1 ad ph	B. Gervais
11/3	W. Newbury	300	P. + F. Vale	<b>Northern Fulmar</b>			
11/5	Southboro	200	G. Gove#	11/7, 12/27	Rockport (A.P.)	1, 11	R. Heil
11/17	Pembroke	238	G. d'Entremont#	11/9	Eastham (F.E.)	2	B. Nikula
11/24	Sudbury	105	B. Black#	11/22	P'town	1	B. Nikula
12/2	Eastham	143	M. Faherty	<b>Black-capped Petrel</b>			
12/13	Plymouth	127	I. Davies	12/21	Rockport (A.P.)	1	R. Heil
12/27	Haverhill	105	S. Mirick	<b>Cory's Shearwater</b>			
12/31	Nantucket	200	G. d'Entremont#	11/4, 7	P'town	27, 47	B. Nikula
Northern Bobwhite				11/9	Eastham (F.E.)	19	B. Nikula#
11/3	WBWS	3	M. Dettrey	<b>Great Shearwater</b>			
11/3	N. Falmouth	24	M. Pimental	11/7, 22	P'town	11, 3	B. Nikula
11/12	Brewster	8	P. Trull	11/7	Rockport (A.P.)	2	R. Heil
Ring-necked Pheasant				11/9	Eastham (F.E.)	7	B. Nikula#
11/4	Templeton	2	W. Howes	11/10	Nant. Sound	25	BBC Pelagic
11/18	Ware R. IBA	1 m	M. Lynch#	<b>Manx Shearwater</b>			
11/18	Falmouth	2	G. Hirth	11/3	P'town (R.P.)	1	S. Arena
11/24	Cuttyhunk	1	I. Davies	11/9	Eastham (F.E.)	2	B. Nikula#
12/2	Saugus	1	S. Zende	11/10	Nant. Sound	8	BBC Pelagic
Ruffed Grouse				<b>Leach's Storm-Petrel</b>			
11/6	Barnstable	2	P. Crosson	11/9	Eastham (F.E.)	8	B. Nikula#
12/13	Rockland	1	G. d'Entremont	<b>Brown Booby</b>			
Wild Turkey				12/12	Wellfleet	1 imm	D. Logan
11/17	Newbury	18	J. Berry	12/19	Eastham (F.E.)	1 imm	Z. Lohman
12/1	Royalston	15	F. Vale#	<b>Northern Gannet</b>			
12/22	Grafton	38	N. Paulson	11/7	Rockport (A.P.)	930	R. Heil
Red-throated Loon				11/10	Nant. Sound	623	BBC Pelagic
11/7	Manomet	151	A. Kneidel#	11/9, 12/28	Eastham	2145, 545	B. Nikula

Northern Gannet (continued)				12/24	Acton	1	P. Boothroyd
12/16	Nantucket	700	K. Blackshaw#	Bald Eagle			
12/17, 27	Rockport (A.P.)	280, 240	R. Heil	11/12	P.I.	3	K. Allen
Double-crested Cormorant				11/12	S. Quabbin	3	M. Lynch#
11/2	Salisbury B.	65	J. Berry#	11/18	Barre Falls	4	Hawkcount (DS)
11/10	Mattapoisett	29	M. Lynch#	11/24	Quabbin	6	T. Gagnon#
11/17	P.I.	40	K. Elwell	Northern Harrier			
11/28	Revere B.	80	P. Peterson	thr	P.I.	8 max	v.o.
12/16	Waltham	2	J. Forbes#	11/11	Nantucket	4	K. Blackshaw
12/26	Rockport	2	J. Berry#	11/12	Cumb. Farms	5	N. Paulson
Great Cormorant				11/15	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	7	P. Champlin
11/11	Rockport	116	J. Berry#	11/30	Bridgewater	3	S. Arena#
11/15	Westport	16	J. Hoye#	Sharp-shinned Hawk			
11/23	Cuttyhunk	35	I. Davies	11/1	Westport	2	M. Iliff
<b>American White Pelican</b>				11/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	2	P. Champlin#
11/2	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore#	11/3	Barre Falls	3	Hawkcount (BK)
11/3-11	Wellfleet	1	P. Henson	11/4	Malden (PR)	4	Hawkcount (CJ)
11/7-24	Eastham	1	v.o.	11/27	P.I.	2	D. Chickering
<b>Brown Pelican</b>				Cooper's Hawk			
11/1	Harwich Port	1 ph	B. Nikula	11/1	Sharon	2	P. + F. Vale
11/1	Chatham (MI)	1	B. Nikula	11/3	Malden (PR)	2	Hawkcount (CJ)
11/1-3	Nantucket	3 ph	v.o.	11/5	Barre Falls	2	Hawkcount (BK)
11/2	Chilmark	1 ph	L. McDowell#	12/16	Wakefield	2	P. + F. Vale
11/2	P'town	1 ph	S. Ellis	12/20	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore
11/2-3	Brewster	1 ph	D. Clapp#	Northern Goshawk			
11/2-4	Mattapoisett	1 ph	Kristen Demong	11/3	Barre Falls.	1	Hawkcount (BK)
11/4	Truro	2	T. Lipsky	11/9	Granville	2	J. Weeks
11/17-24	Eastham	1 ph	W. Sprauve#	11/9	Squantum	1 imm	R. Donovan
American Bittern				12/14	Wellfleet	1	M. Faherty
11/1	Eastham (F.E.)	2	N. Hayward#	Red-shouldered Hawk			
11/15	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	2	P. Champlin	11/4-16	Barre Falls	12	Hawkcount (BK)
12/5	Newbury	2	R. Heil	12/16	Northbridge	1	M. Lynch#
Great Blue Heron				12/22	Southwick	1	S. Svec
11/18	Saugus	10	S. Zende#	12/30	Rehoboth	1	K. Bartels
12/19	Squantum	10	P. Peterson	Red-tailed Hawk			
Great Egret				11/1-20	Barre Falls	89	Hawkcount (BK)
11/1	Westport	13	J. Hoye#	11/10	Fairhaven	7	M. Lynch#
11/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	5	P. Champlin#	12/11	P.I.	6	R. Heil
12/26	Chatham	1	F. Atwood	Rough-legged Hawk			
12/29	M.V.	1	T. Spahr	thr	P.I.	1-4	v.o.
12/4-18	Hyannis	1-2	D. Pettee	11/9	Deerfield	1	Z. Jakub
<b>Little Egret</b>				11/16	Barre Falls	1	Hawkcount (BK)
11/21-30	Barnstable	1	Kricher, Hlousek	11/26	Cumb. Farms	2 lt	J. Carlisle
12/1-12	Hyannis	1	v.o.	12/2	Worcester	1	D. Grant
12/17	Falmouth	1 ph	G. Hirth#	12/6	Boston	1	P. + F. Vale
12/26	Chatham	1	J. Trimble#	12/29	Rowley	1 lt	J. Berry
Little Blue Heron				12/31	DWWS	1	J. Young
11/19	Westwood	2 imm	Jen Draper	12/31	Hadley	1	J. Lawson
12/21	Whitinsville	1 juv	J. Lawson	<b>Golden Eagle</b>			
12/16	Northbridge	1	M. Lynch#	11/17	Granville	1	J. Weeks
Cattle Egret				12/3	Ipswich	1 imm	J. Berry
11/2	Cheshire	1	J. Morris-Siegel	Clapper Rail			
11/4	Yarmouth	1	J. Duggan	11/6	Harwich	2	B. Nikula
11/5	Dartmouth	1	P. Champlin	12/1-7	Eastham	1	v.o.
11/4-5	Wellfleet	1	J. Riehl#	Virginia Rail			
Black-crowned Night-Heron				11/20	Peabody	2	R. Heil
11/6	Duxbury	1 imm	R. Bowes	11/23	Cuttyhunk	3	I. Davies
12/24	Gloucester (E.P.)	2 imm	v.o.	11/23	Eastham	3	v.o.
12/31	Plymouth	1 imm	L. Fuller	12/26	Wellfleet	5	S. Broker
<b>White Ibis</b>				12/30	Nantucket	4	G. d'Entremont#
11/14-15	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1 imm ph	P. Champlin	Sora			
Black Vulture				11/3	GMNWR	1	A. Bragg
11/24	Sheffield	26	J. Drucker	12/16	E. Boston	1	CBC (R. Stymeist)
12/12	Blackstone	1	J. McCoy	Common Gallinule			
Turkey Vulture				thr	Nantucket	2	V. Laux
11/4	N. Truro	8	B. Nikula	American Coot			
11/4	Braintree	5	P. Peterson	11/4	Braintree	55	P. Peterson
11/13	Essex	6	P. Brown	11/26	GMNWR	83	A. Bragg#
12/29	Nantucket	6	G. d'Entremont#	12/2	Eastham	116	M. Faherty
Osprey				12/13	Plymouth	231	I. Davies
11/10	Winchester	2	R. LaFontaine#	12/14	Mashpee	250	M. Keleher
11/20	Lynn	2 imm	R. Heil	12/15	Waltham	60	J. Forbes
12/19	Ipswich	1	P. + F. Vale	12/15	W. Boxford	60	T. Walker

American Coot (continued)				White-rumped Sandpiper			
12/31 Nantucket	150	G. d'Entremont#		11/2 P.I.	9		S. Arena
<b>Northern Lapwing</b>				11/15 S. Dart. (A.Pd)	6		P. Champlin
thr Nantucket	2	v.o.		11/17 Wachusett Res.	1		M. Lynch#
11/11-13 Cumb. Farms	1	J. Carlisle + v.o.		11/17 Sterling	1		A. Marble
11/12-12/31 Bridgewater	1	K. Ryan + v.o.		<b>Pectoral Sandpiper</b>			
<b>Black-bellied Plover</b>				11/6 Lynn	3		R. Heil
11/3 P'town	250	S. Arena		11/14 Ipswich	1		J. Berry
11/3 P.I.	120	S. Sullivan#		11/23 Bolton Flats	1		T. Pirro
11/3 Duxbury B.	25	R. Bowes		11/18 Newbury	1		E. Labato
11/18 W. Gloucester	18	J. + M. Nelson		<b>Purple Sandpiper</b>			
11/24 Duxbury B.	12	R. Bowes		11/3 P.I.	1		A. Gurka#
12/16 Ipswich (C.B.)	3	J. Berry#		11/9 Cohasset	2		P. Peterson
<b>American Golden-Plover</b>				11/23 Cuttyhunk	20		I. Davies
11/2 Newbury	1 juv	S. Arena		12/9 Nantucket	67		K. Blackshaw#
11/12 P.I.	1	K. Allen		12/29 Hull	33		S. Williams
11/24 Newbury	1	S. Arena		12/29 Rockport (A.P.)	20		P. + F. Vale
<b>Semipalmated Plover</b>				<b>Dunlin</b>			
11/2 P.I.	28	S. Arena		11/2 P.I.	415		S. Arena
11/3 P'town (R.P.)	3	S. Arena		11/12 Cumb. Farms	5		N. Paulson
11/12 Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes		11/24 Duxbury B.	750		R. Bowes
11/12 Chatham (S.B.)	5	B. Harris#		12/16 Ipswich (C.B.)	320		J. Berry#
12/3 Nantucket	1	V. Laux		12/23 Scituate	100		G. d'Entremont#
<b>Killdeer</b>				<b>Short-billed Dowitcher</b>			
11/2 Rochester	47	J. Sweeney		11/12 Chatham (S.B.)	1		B. Harris#
11/11 Acton	22	J. Forbes		<b>Long-billed Dowitcher</b>			
11/13 Bridgewater	37	P. Peterson		12/9 Duxbury	1		R. Bowes
11/14 Ipswich	24	J. Berry		<b>Wilson's Snipe</b>			
11/28 Scituate	19	S. Maguire		11/12 Cumb. Farms	5		N. Paulson
12/29 Arlington Res.	2	A. Perkins		11/14 Bolton Flats	6		J. Hoye#
<b>American Oystercatcher</b>				12/15 Richmond	2		T. Tynning
11/19 Squantum	1	S. Roberts		12/19 Arlington Res.	1		J. Schneider
12/3 Nantucket	3	V. Laux		12/31 DWWS	1		J. Young
12/31 Chatham	1	P. Flood#		<b>American Woodcock</b>			
<b>Solitary Sandpiper</b>				12/31 Barnstable	3		M. Faherty
11/1 Arlington Res.	2	J. Trimble		<b>Red Phalarope</b>			
<b>Greater Yellowlegs</b>				11/1 S. Hadley	1 dead		N. Charney
11/1-12/14 P.I.	48 max	v.o.		11/8 Marston Mills	1		R. Donovan#
11/3 P'town	32	S. Arena		11/9, 12/28 Eastham (F.E.)	83, 2		B. Nikula
11/15 S. Dart. (A.Pd)	37	P. Champlin		11/10 Nant. Sound	1		BBC Pelagic
11/23 WBWS	32	D. Bates		<b>Black-legged Kittiwake</b>			
12/2 W. Harwich	15	B. Nikula		11/1 Upton	1 ph dead		M. Byrne
12/22 Centerville	4	CBC (B. Nikula)		11/5 Quabbin Pk	1 ph		L. Therrien
12/29 Nantucket	3	G. d'Entremont#		11/5 Turners Falls	1		J. Smith
<b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b>				11/8, 12/28 Eastham	430, 570		B. Nikula
11/1 P.I.	1	T. Wetmore		11/10 Nant. Sound	317		BBC Pelagic
11/3 Essex	9	J. Nelson		11/22 P'town	860		B. Nikula
<b>Ruddy Turnstone</b>				12/27 Rockport (A.P.)	464		R. Heil
11/3 P'town	55	S. Arena		<b>Sabine's Gull</b>			
11/12 Chatham (S.B.)	17	B. Harris#		11/9 Eastham (F.E.)	1 imm		N. Bonomo#
11/18 Fairhaven	16	BBC (R. Stymeist)		<b>Bonaparte's Gull</b>			
12/1 W. Falmouth	25	R. Farrell		11/6 Turners Falls	1		J. Smith
12/9 Nantucket	123	K. Blackshaw#		11/24 Duxbury B.	370		R. Bowes
12/15 Quincy	29	J. Young		11/28 Amherst	1		N. Papian
<b>Red Knot</b>				12/11 P.I.	140		R. Heil
11/9 Cohasset	1	P. Peterson		12/17 Rockport (A.P.)	289		R. Heil
11/12 Chatham (S.B.)	250	B. Harris#		12/31 Nantucket	2500		G. d'Entremont#
11/17 P.I.	3	R. Stymeist		<b>Black-headed Gull</b>			
11/20 Plymouth	3	S. van der Veen		thr Nantucket	1-2		v.o.
<b>Sanderling</b>				11/14 P.I.	1		MAS (D. Larson)
thr P.I.	520 max	v.o.		11/25 Wellfleet H.	1 imm		B. Nikula
11/3 Duxbury B.	435	R. Bowes		11/26 Barnstable	2		R. Debenham
11/3 P'town	300	S. Arena		12/thr Hyannis	1		v.o.
11/17 Westport	100	J. Hoye#		12/17 Rockport (A.P.)	1 ad		R. Heil
12/16 Nantucket	250	K. Blackshaw#		12/20 Marshfield	1		Z. Loman
12/29 Hyannis	25	G. d'Entremont#		<b>Little Gull</b>			
<b>Semipalmated Sandpiper</b>				11/9 Eastham (F.E.)	1 imm		J. Sweeney#
11/10 Newbury	1	P. + F. Vale		11/22 P'town	2 ad.		B. Nikula
11/12 Chatham (S.B.)	1	B. Harris#		12/31 Nantucket	1 ad		G. d'Entremont#
11/12 Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes		<b>Laughing Gull</b>			
11/23 P.I.	4	T. Wetmore		11/1 Westport	20		M. Iliff
<b>Least Sandpiper</b>				11/4 P.I.	1 1W		N. Paulson
11/3 Nantucket	1	P. Miliotis		11/22 P'town	1		B. Nikula

Laughing Gull (continued)				Parasitic Jaeger			
12/2	Hyannis	1	J. Hoye#	11/7	P'town	4	B. Nikula
12/3	Nantucket	1	V. Laux	11/7	Manomet	1	A. Kneidel#
Iceland Gull				11/8	Eastham (F.E.)	2	B. Nikula
12/9	Lynn	4	J. Quigley	11/10	Nant. Sound	1	BBC Pelagic
12/15	Agawam	2	S. Kellogg#	Jaeger species			
12/29	Hull	8	S. Williams	11/8, 9	Eastham (F.E.)	16, 15	B. Nikula
12/31	Wilmington	2	R. Stymeist	Dovekie			
12/31	Nantucket	25	G. d'Entremont#	11/7	Rockport (AP)	3470	R. Heil
Lesser Black-backed Gull				11/7	P'town (R.P.)	1400	B. Nikula
thr	Boston	1 ad	R. Stymeist	11/8, 9	Eastham (F.E.)	2625, 481	B. Nikula
11/7	Plymouth	1 1W	E. Dalton	12/17	Rockport (A.P.)	18	R. Heil
11/23	Cuttyhunk	1 1W	I. Davies	12/28, 30	Eastham (F.E.)	51, 4	B. Nikula#
12/7	GMNWR	1 2W	C. Cook	Common Murre			
12/20	Wilmington	1 1W	S. Sullivan	11/7, 12/21	Rockport (A.P.)	3, 307	R. Heil
12/30	Turners Falls	1	J. Smith	12/28	Eastham (F.E.)	35	B. Nikula#
12/31	Nantucket	125	G. d'Entremont#	Thick-billed Murre			
Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull				11/23	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
12/22	Centerville (CBC)	1	B. Nikula	11/9, 12/28	Eastham (F.E.)	3, 3	B. Nikula#
Glaucous Gull				12/19-20	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek
12/5	P.I.	1 1W	M. Iliff	12/21	Rockport (A.P.)	15	R. Heil
12/31	Nantucket	1 1W	G. d'Entremont	12/9	P'town H.	1	B. Nikula
12/31	Gloucester	1 1W	C. Haines	Razorbill			
12/31	Wilmington	2	R. Stymeist	thr	P.I.	530 max	v.o.
Common Tern				thr	Rockport	1085 max	R. Heil
11/1	Westport	2	M. Iliff	thr	P'town	1000 max	B. Nikula
11/7	P'town	50	B. Nikula	thr	Eastham	10300 max	B. Nikula
11/9	Eastham (F.E.)	5	B. Nikula#	12/2	Wellfleet	300	M. Faherty
11/12	Chatham (S.B.)	2 imm	B. Harris#	Black Guillemot			
Forster's Tern				11/7, 12/27	Rockport (A.P.)	3, 12	R. Heil
11/1	Eastham (F.E.)	2	N. Hayward#	11/24	Duxbury B.	2	R. Bowes
11/2	Fairhaven	3	J. Sweeney	12/9	P.I.	2	N. Paulson
11/10	Newbypt H.	1	M. Resch#	12/26	Gloucester	6	J. Berry#
11/15	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	2	P. Champlin	Atlantic Puffin			
12/1	Salisbury	1	J. Trimble	11/9	Barnstable (S.N.)	1	R. Donovan#
Pomarine Jaeger				11/13	Nantucket	1	V. Laux
11/10	Nant. Sound	10	BBC Pelagic	12/27	Rockport (A.P.)	3	R. Heil
11/22, 12/1	P'town	10, 1	B. Nikula	12/28	Eastham (F.E.)	8	B. Nikula
11/8, 12/28	Eastham (F.E.)	102, 25	B. Nikula				
12/17, 27	Rockport (A.P.)	3, 7	R. Heil				



RAZORBILLS BY DAVID CLAPP

## OWLS THROUGH FINCHES

Barred Owls are essentially non-migratory, but when there is a food shortage, they are forced to wander in search of prey. Starting in mid-November there were reports of Barred Owls throughout the state, including a number of deaths, primarily from road kills. Several Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) reported record numbers—not the same for Snowy Owls this year with only six birds compared to a total of 20 individuals reported last year. It was a good year for Northern Saw-whet Owls at the four banding sites, where a total of 217 individuals were banded in the first 18 days of November. That coupled with a total of 487 banded in October comes to an amazing 704 Saw-whet Owls.

Once again it was a good fall for vagrant hummingbirds. Six **Rufous Hummingbirds** were reported, all of which were trapped, measured, and banded. Also reported were six other Selasphorus hummingbirds, three from one location. **Allen's Hummingbirds** were noted from Great Barrington, and another, a male, was photographed on Martha's Vineyard. Perhaps even more unusual for this time period was the Ruby-throated Hummingbird that first appeared in North Falmouth on October 31 and continued through the end of the year. It survived late December temperatures of 23 degrees and wind gusts of up to 40 mph.

The after effects of Hurricane Sandy with its southwest winds brought a number of cool passerines to the area including Eastern Wood Pewee, **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**, several Western Kingbirds, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Tennessee, Cape May and Bay-breasted warblers, and **LeConte's Sparrow**. The parade of rarities continued into November; strong southwesterly winds and warm temperatures on November 11–12 brought an influx of more strays, notably **Cave Swallows**, which were reported from over twenty locations. These same winds may have been responsible for a **Mountain Bluebird** in Gloucester and two Black-and-white Warblers in Milton. Other November specialties included a **Varied Thrush** on Cuttyhunk, three "**Audubon's**" **Warblers** plus another in December, a **Western Tanager** in Berkley, and a **Yellow-headed Blackbird** at Cumberland Farms.

December is a busy month for birders many of whom are scouting their areas for the upcoming Christmas Bird Counts. Some of the birds found in December included an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** in Gloucester, White-eyed Vireos from Falmouth and Wellfleet, a Blue-winged Warbler and a Yellow Warbler found on the Quincy CBC, a **MacGillivray's Warbler** in the Fenway, a **Bullock's Oriole** in Marblehead, and a **Painted Bunting** on Thompson Island for the Greater Boston CBC.

The winter finch flight this year was historic. White-winged Crossbills invaded the area in early November with flocks into the hundreds in Salisbury, Truro, and Wellfleet. It had been nearly 50 years since numbers of this magnitude had been seen on Cape Cod. The poor cone crop in the boreal forest seems to have created a mass exodus from the north. Red-breasted Nuthatches started to appear in late summer; then Pine Siskins came through. There was a record showing of Red Crossbills. Research has suggested that there could be up to ten different species of Red Crossbill with slight differences in call notes, and many of the birds seen in our area were identified as a type 3, a bird that breeds occasionally at the Great Lakes and into Ontario. Early November also brought a widespread arrival of Evening Grosbeaks, a bird that has been uncommon and hard to find for many years in our area. Common Redpolls started to appear in mid-November and really exploded in December with flocks reaching 200 in many areas. Among the flocks, several **Hoary Redpolls** were identified. Pine Grosbeaks moved into our area with small flocks in a number of places starting in late November and many more came in December. It may be many more years until we see a winter finch flight like this again in our area, and it sure was wonderful!

*R. Stymeist*

Barn Owl				12/28	Taunton	1	J. Eckerson
11/4	Edgartown	1	B. Cassie	Red-bellied Woodpecker			
12/31	Nantucket	1	G. d'Entremont#	11/3	Quincy	7	P. Peterson
Eastern Screech-Owl				12/8	Boylston	4	M. Lynch#
12/2	Worcester	2	M. Lynch#	12/23	N. Marshfield	9	G. d'Entremont#
12/9	Plainville	8	J. Fecteau#	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			
12/25	Foxboro	4	B. Cassie	11/20	Peabody	2	R. Heil
Great Horned Owl				12/11	Boston (A.A.)	3	P. Peterson
11/1	Mt.A.	2	R. Stymeist#	12/20	DFWS	2	P. Sowizral
11/12	Berlin	2	R. Langer	Hairy Woodpecker			
11/23	Cuttyhunk	2	I. Davies	11/18	Ware R. IBA	7	M. Lynch#
11/28	Easton	3	B. Cassie	12/1	Royalston	3	F. Vale#
12/15	Berlin	3	R. Langer	12/8	Boylston	4	M. Lynch#
Snowy Owl				Northern Flicker			
1/19	Falmouth	1	A. Herold	12/2	Cumb. Farms	16	J. Carlisle
12/2	Duxbury B.	1 imm	R. Bowes	Pileated Woodpecker			
12/16	Boston (Logan)	3	CBC (N. Smith)	11/10	Quabbin (G37)	5	T. Pirro
12/24	Cuttyhunk	1	B. Cassie	12/9	Stoneham	3	D. + I. Jewell
Barred Owl				12/29	Sturbridge	2	B. Barnes
thr	Reports of indiv from 34 locations			Eastern Wood-Pewee			
12/16	Boston	12	CBC	11/4	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak
12/16	Northampton	19	CBC	Eastern Phoebe			
12/18	Sturbridge	11	CBC	11/9	P.I.	1	C. Gras
Long-eared Owl				11/15	Taunton	1	J. Eckerson
11/thr	DWWS	2 b	<i>fide</i> N. Smith	11/21	Lexington	1	K. Hartel
12/20-30	Salisbury	1	v.o.	11/22	Northampton	1	L. Therrien
12/29	Worthington	1	E. Lewis	11/24	Cuttyhunk	3	I. Davies
Short-eared Owl				12/30	DFWS	1	P. Sowizral
11/9	P.I.	1	K. Elwell	<b>Ash-throated Flycatcher</b>			
11/17	Salisbury	1	Z. Jakub#	11/3-5	Squantum	1	M. McWade + v.o.
11/23-12/31	Orleans	1	C. Thompson	12/16-20	Gloucester	1	B. Volkle + v.o.
12/9	P.I.	1	S. Riley	Western Kingbird			
Northern Saw-whet Owl				11/3	Nantucket	1	V. Laux
11/thr	Sharon	32 b	<i>fide</i> N. Smith	11/3-27	Nantucket	1	D. Ely + v.o.
11/1-15	DWWS	46 b	<i>fide</i> N. Smith	11/4	Gay Head	1	B. Cassie
11/2-17	Northbridge	66 b	B. Milke#	11/thr	Eastham	1-3	v.o.
11/2-18	DFWS	73 b	K. Seymour#	11/thr	Nantucket	1	v.o.
11/7	Gill	4	J. Smith	12/thr	Nantucket	1	v.o.
11/28	Easton	2	B. Cassie	<b>Scissor-tailed Flycatcher</b>			
Ruby-throated Hummingbird				11/6	WBWS	1 ph	J. Shine
thr	N. Falmouth	1	I. Nisbet	Northern Shrike			
<b>Rufous Hummingbird</b>				thr	Reports of indiv. From 23 locations		
thr	Concord	1 ph b	L. Levan	White-eyed Vireo			
11/thr	Orleans	1 b	B. Murphy	12/15	Falmouth	1	M. Iliff#
11/1-5	Amherst	1 m b ph	C. Mankowski	12/23	Wellfleet	1	J. Young
11/15-21	Eastham	1 b	W. Underhill	Blue-headed Vireo			
11/1-12/15	W. Bridgewater	1 ad f	P. Bennett	11/3	Nahant	1	J. Trimble
12/15-31	Wellfleet	1 b	<i>fide</i> S. Finnegan	12/8	Wellfleet	1	M. Iliff#
<b>Allen's Hummingbird</b>				12/15	Sandwich	1	R. Buckner#
11/1-19	Great Barrington	1 b	G. Ward, A. Hill	12/16	Easthampton	1	B. Bieda
11/29	Vineyard Haven	1 m ph	S. Stephens	Red-eyed Vireo			
<b>Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird</b>				11/24	Cuttyhunk	1	I. Davies
thr	Nantucket	1 ph	v.o.	Fish Crow			
11/1-7	E. Orleans	2	<i>fide</i> S. Finnegan	11/1	Sharon	12	P. + F. Vale
11/1-12/10	Padanaram	3 ph	G. Dennis	11/24	Swansea	5	J. Sweeney
American Kestrel				12/5	Dover	100	B. Harris
11/18	Saugus	2	S. Zende#	12/15	Falmouth	295	M. Keleher
12/15	Newbypt	2	P. + F. Vale	Common Raven			
Merlin				11/19	Needham	2	G. Long
11/3	Barre Falls	2	Hawkcount (BK)	11/20	GMNWR	2	S. Perkins
11/15	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	3	P. Champlin	12/1	Wrentham	2	G. d'Entremont
11/21	Salisbury	3	K. Elwell	12/2	Worcester	2	M. Lynch#
11/23	P.I.	2	F. Vale#	12/2	Royalston	2	B. Volkle#
Peregrine Falcon				12/11	Boston (A.A.)	2	P. Peterson
11/1	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore	Horned Lark			
11/21	Gloucester	2	MAS (B. Gette)	11/4	Templeton	168	W. Howes#
12/6	Brockton	pr	K. Ryan	11/25	Leicester	75	M. Lynch#
12/13	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore	11/25	Northampton	400	T. Gagnon
Red-headed Woodpecker				12/22	Acton	50	J. Forbes
11/4	Melrose	1	J. Lounsbury#	12/23	Ipswich	85	J. Berry#
11/7	Amesbury	1	J. Moore	12/30	Sharon	100	J. Baur#
11/14	P.I.	1	D. Chickering#	Tree Swallow			
12/20-31	Boston (Fens)	1	S. Williams + v.o.	11/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	4	A. Morgan#

Tree Swallow (continued)				11/4	DFWS	30	P. Sowizral
11/3	P.I.	2	A. Gurka#	11/12	GMNWR	21	A. Bragg#
11/4, 12/21	Nantucket	517, 2	v.o.	11/30	Ipswich	20	J. Berry
11/17	Truro	7	M. Iliiff	<b>Mountain Bluebird</b>			
11/24	Cuttyhunk	3	I. Davies	11/11-14	Gloucester	1 ph	J. Berry + v.o.
12/21	Nantucket	2	V. Laux	<b>Swainson's Thrush</b>			
<b>Cave Swallow</b>				11/3	Nantucket	1	V. Laux
thr	Reports of 1-5 indiv. from 16 locations						
11/12	Rockport (H.P.)	5	C. Floyd	<b>Hermit Thrush</b>			
11/12	Chatham (S.B.)	6	B. Harris#	11/4	Squantum	3	G. d'Entremont
11/14	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	55	P. Champlin	11/5	Waltham	5	J. Forbes
11/24	Westport	8	SSBC (GdE)	11/10	Fairhaven	6	M. Lynch#
11/25	Chatham Light	12	B. Nikula#	11/23-24	Cuttyhunk	4	I. Davies
12/5	Duxbury B.	9	F. Bygate#	12/15	Falmouth	11	M. Keleher#
				12/28	Marblehead	3	J. Berry#
<b>Barn Swallow</b>				<b>Varied Thrush</b>			
11/6	Nantucket	6	V. Laux	11/23	Cuttyhunk	1 ph	I. Davies
11/24	Mashpee	2	M. & A. Keleher	<b>Gray Catbird</b>			
12/7	Newbypt H.	1	S. Sullivan	11/18	Fairhaven	4	BBC (R. Stymeist)
<b>Red-breasted Nuthatch</b>				11/23	Cuttyhunk	7	I. Davies
11/2	Salisbury B.	31	J. Berry#	12/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	10	N. Paulson
11/10	Quabbin (G37)	106	T. Pirro	12/2	Worcester	1	M. Lynch#
11/11	Berlin	32	R. Langer	12/16	BHI (Thompson)	1	N. Yusuff
11/18	Ware R. IBA	96	M. Lynch#	<b>Brown Thrasher</b>			
11/19	P.I.	25	T. Wetmore	11/17	P.I.	1	R. Schain
11/22	Truro	25	B. Nikula#	11/18	Fairhaven	3	BBC (R. Stymeist)
12/12	Ipswich (C.B.)	13	J. Berry#	12/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	N. Paulson
<b>Brown Creeper</b>				<b>American Pipit</b>			
11/5	GMNWR	6	A. Bragg#	11/3	Granville	80	J. Weeks
11/10	Quabbin (G37)	16	T. Pirro	11/9	Deerfield	112	Z. Jakub
11/11	Berlin	5	R. Langer	11/11	Acton	70	J. Forbes
11/18	Ware R. IBA	9	M. Lynch#	11/13	Bridgewater	100	P. Peterson
11/21	IRWS	4	J. Nelson	11/18	New Braintree	60	W. Howes#
<b>Carolina Wren</b>				11/29	Ipswich	45	J. Berry
11/18	Boston (Long I.)	10	R. Donovan#	12/15	Pittsfield	35	T. Collins#
11/18	Fairhaven	22	BBC (R. Stymeist)	<b>Bohemian Waxwing</b>			
11/24	Cuttyhunk	38	I. Davies	11/3	Amherst	1	F. Bowrys
12/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	37	N. Paulson	11/10	Granville	1	J. Weeks
12/15	Falmouth	29	M. Keleher#	11/11	N. Truro	4 ph	B. Nikula
12/23	N. Marshfield	24	G. d'Entremont#	11/17	P.I.	2	R. Templeton
12/28	Marblehead	13	J. Berry#	<b>Cedar Waxwing</b>			
<b>House Wren</b>				11/3	Sutton	23	M. Lynch#
11/2	Manomet	1	M. Iliiff	11/4	Squantum	70	G. d'Entremont
11/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	1	P. Champlin#	11/10	P.I.	30	T. Wetmore
11/4	Acoaxet	1	E. Nielsen	11/11	Cumb. Farms	20	J. Carlisle
11/22	Bridgewater	1	J. Carlisle	11/11	Rockport	20	J. Berry#
<b>Winter Wren</b>				<b>Lapland Longspur</b>			
11/13	Lexington	3	M. Rines	11/9	Dorchester	5	R. Donovan
11/18	Fairhaven	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)	11/26	Newbury	6	B. Hodson
11/25	Cuttyhunk	4	I. Davies	12/2	Saugus	5	S. Zende
12/3	Medford	2	R. LaFontaine	12/11	P.I.	35	R. Heil
12/8	Boylston	3	M. Lynch#	12/31	Hadley	5	T. Gagnon
12/15	Holyoke	3	B. Bieda	<b>Snow Bunting</b>			
<b>Marsh Wren</b>				11/8	P.I.	160	T. Wetmore
11/20	Dorchester	3	R. Donovan#	11/9	Concord (NAC)	60	S. Perkins
11/23	Cuttyhunk	3	I. Davies	11/12	Duxbury B.	215	R. Bowes
12/5	Newbury	4	R. Heil	11/19	Hatfield	100	S. Sauter
12/20	GMNWR	5	W. Martins	12/16	Lexington	86	J. Forbes#
12/30	Nantucket	5	G. d'Entremont#	12/29	Worthington	100	E. Lewis
<b>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher</b>				12/30	Greenfield	80	CBC
11/1	P.I.	1	B. Murphy	<b>Ovenbird</b>			
<b>Golden-crowned Kinglet</b>				11/2	Nahant	1	L. Pivacek
11/4	Braintree	9	P. Peterson	12/1	Chatham	1	R. Schain
11/10	Quabbin (G37)	15	T. Pirro	<b>Northern Waterthrush</b>			
11/18	Ware R. IBA	28	M. Lynch#	11/25	Cuttyhunk	1	I. Davies
<b>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</b>				<b>Blue-winged Warbler</b>			
11/4	Douglas	4	M. Lynch#	12/15	Braintree	1	CBC (GdE)
11/5	GMNWR	2	A. Bragg#	<b>Black-and-white Warbler</b>			
11/6	Squantum	2	P. Peterson	11/13	Milton	2	E. Lipton
11/18	Fairhaven	2	BBC (R. Stymeist)	12/2	Brookline	1	P. Peterson
12/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	3	N. Paulson	12/14-30	Medford	1	J. Restivo
<b>Eastern Bluebird</b>				12/26-31	Carlisle	1	K. Harte
11/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	17	P. Champlin#	<b>Tennessee Warbler</b>			
11/3	Quincy	18	P. Peterson	11/2	Arlington	1	M. Rines

Tennessee Warbler (continued)			11/4	Acoaxet	2	E. Nielsen
11/2-4	Edgartown	1	T. Spahr	11/23	Cuttyhunk	2
Orange-crowned Warbler			12/14	P.I.	2	B. Buxton#
11/3	Waltham	1	J. Forbes	Eastern Towhee		
11/11	Wakefield	1	D. + I. Jewell	11/24	Cuttyhunk	11
11/20	Dorchester	1	R. Donovan	12/15	Quincy	2
12/13	Arlington	1	R. Stymeist#	12/15	Falmouth	3
12/15	Braintree	1	G. d'Entremont#	American Tree Sparrow		
Nashville Warbler				11/11	Wakefield	30
11/4	Newton	1	H. Miller	11/15	P.I.	35
11/6	WBWS	1	M. Faherty	11/17	Dorchester	100
11/6	Barnstable	1	P. Crosson	11/25	Westboro	73
11/24	Dorchester	1	R. Donovan	12/23	Quabog IBA	62
12/13-24	Boston (Fens)	1	R. Stymeist	12/23	W. Roxbury	60
<b>MacGillivray's Warbler</b>				Chipping Sparrow		
12/13-23	Boston (Fens)	1 f	T. Factor + v.o.	11/4	P.I.	2
Common Yellowthroat				12/16	Wrentham	2
11/thr	Reports of indiv. from 13 locations			Clay-colored Sparrow		
12/4	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff	11/1	Westport	1
12/8	Boylston	1	M. Lynch#	11/2	Boston (Fens)	1
American Redstart				11/3	Uxbridge	1
11/18	Fairhaven	1	L. Abbey#	11/20-12/13	Arlington Res.	1
Cape May Warbler				12/23	Hadley	1
11/2	WBWS	1	M. Faherty	Field Sparrow		
11/20	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak	12/2	Lakeville	7
Northern Parula				12/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	2
11/3	Chatham	1	E. Nielsen	12/15	Chicopee	2
11/3	Nantucket	1	V. Laux	12/22	Southwick	2
11/4	Acoaxet	1	E. Nielsen	Vesper Sparrow		
11/12	Chatham	1	B. Harris#	11/1	P.I.	1
12/19	Braintree	1	M. Iliff	11/3	Uxbridge	1
Bay-breasted Warbler				11/11	Cumb. Farms	2
11/1	Westport	1	M. Iliff	11/11	Hatfield	3
Yellow Warbler				11/18	Fairhaven	1
12/15	Braintree	1	CBC (GdE)	12/31	Hadley	2
Blackpoll Warbler				Lark Sparrow		
11/1	Medford	2	R. LaFontaine	11/3	Beverly	1
11/2, 19	Boston (PG)	4, 1	v.o.	11/23-30	Wrentham	1
11/21	Nantucket	4	V. Laux	Savannah Sparrow		
Black-throated Blue Warbler				11/4	Uxbridge	40
11/1	Medford	1 m	R. LaFontaine	11/5	Westboro	40
11/4	Acoaxet	1	E. Nielsen	12/2	Cumb. Farms	20
12/16-25	Topsfield	1 m	A. Prazar	12/31	Hadley	60
Palm Warbler				Ipswich Sparrow		
11/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	3	P. Champlin#	11/11	P.I.	2
11/10	P.I.	4	P. + F. Vale	11/24	Cuttyhunk	2
11/13	Bridgewater	6	P. Peterson	12/13	Duxbury B.	5
11/21	Nantucket	11	V. Laux	12/16	Ipswich (C.B.)	4
12/16	S. Hadley	1	C. Trosset	Grasshopper Sparrow		
12/26	Manomet	1	K. Doyon	11/16	Concord	1
Pine Warbler				12/15	Falmouth	1
12/2	Lakeville	2	M. Iliff	<b>Le Conte's Sparrow</b>		
12/25	Manomet	1	K. Doyon	11/1-17	Eastham	1
12/26	Malden	1	K. Marshall	Nelson's Sparrow		
12/31	Williamstown	1	P. Weatherbee	11/23	Eastham	2-6
Yellow-rumped Warbler				12/7	Eastham	2
11/5	Woburn	11	M. Rines	12/22	Centerville (CBC)	1
11/11	Wachusett Res.	13	R. Langer	Saltmarsh Sparrow		
11/12	Chatham (S.B.)	12	B. Harris#	11/12	P.I.	2
11/23	Cuttyhunk	16	I. Davies	11/15	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	2
12/9	W Springfield	1	B. Hodkins	Seaside Sparrow		
12/24	Sterling	2	M. Lynch#	12/2	Newbury	1
<b>Audubon's Warbler</b>				12/7	Eastham	2
11/4	N. Truro	1	B. Nikula	12/23	Newbury	1
11/25	Cuttyhunk	1 ph	I. Davies	Fox Sparrow		
11/29-12/6	Boston (PG)	1	G. Fabbri + v.o.	11/1	Mt Greylock	18
12/7-15	Salisbury	1	T. Spahr + v.o.	11/5	Woburn	7
Black-throated Green Warbler				11/13	Lexington	29
11/6-8	Jamaica Plain	1	M. Barber	12/2	Boston	8
Wilson's Warbler				12/12	W. Roxbury (MP)	4
12/5	Fairhaven	1	C. Longworth	Lincoln's Sparrow		
Yellow-breasted Chat				11/4	Woburn (HP)	1
thr	Reports of indiv. from 12 locations			11/5	Westboro	1

Lincoln's Sparrow (continued)				<b>Bullock's Oriole</b>			
12/5	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	12/28	Marblehead	1 f	J. Berry#
12/30	Wellfleet	1	M. Faherty	Baltimore Oriole			
Swamp Sparrow				thr	Reports of indiv. from 9 locations		
11/4	Uxbridge	10	M. Lynch#	Pine Grosbeak			
11/18	Fairhaven	10	BBC (R. Stymeist)	thr	Reports of 1-10 indiv. from 29 locations		
11/25	Westboro	9	N. Paulson	11/25	Turners Falls	19	Z. Jakub
12/9	GMNWR	9	C. Johnson	12/1	Gardner	24	T. Pirro
12/24	Braintree	7	P. Peterson	12/4	Westminster	16	G. Dysart
White-throated Sparrow				12/15	Worcester	18	R. Schain
11/4	Boston (RKG)	58	R. Stymeist	12/15	Holden	25	R. Schain
11/18	Fairhaven	56	BBC (R. Stymeist)	12/16	Williamsburg	23	M. Locher
11/24	Cuttyhunk	41	I. Davies	12/16	Amherst	58	J. Ortiz
12/15	Falmouth	51	M. Keleher#	12/23	Belchertown	20	G. Nielan
12/28	Marblehead	49	J. Berry#	12/23	Northampton	18	C. Turnbull
White-crowned Sparrow				12/24	Wilmington	30	M. Doyle
11/3	Worcester	2	D. Grant	12/30	W. Boylston	30	G. Kessler
11/4	Uxbridge	20	M. Lynch#	Purple Finch			
11/4	Concord	6	W. Hutcheson#	11/2	S. Dart. (A.Pd)	8	P. Champlin#
11/4	Cumb. Farms	3	J. Carlisle	11/3	Lexington	10	M. Rines#
<b>Oregon Junco</b>				11/8	Sharon	3	P. Peterson
11/15-19	Marlboro	1 ph	T. Spahr + v.o.	11/11	Rehoboth	2 f	K. Bartels
Scarlet Tanager				12/15	W Springfield	16	M. & K. Conway
11/5	Cheshire	1	J. Pierce	Red Crossbill			
11/27	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw	thr	Reports of 1-15 indiv. from 28 locations		
<b>Western Tanager</b>				11/4	Wachusett Res.	40	R. Schain
11/18-12/2	Berkley	1 ph	<i>fide</i> G. Dennis	11/11	Rockport	34	J. Berry#
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				11/13	Newbypt	30	S. Grinley
11/2	Eastham	1	M. Faherty	11/15	Boston (A.A.)	23	M. Iliiff
11/10	Nantucket	1	K. Blackshaw	11/16	P.I.	30	C. Cook
Blue Grosbeak				11/17	Westport	56	P. Champlin
11/5	S. Dartmouth	1 f imm	P. Champlin	12/9	Ware R. IBA	25	M. Lynch#
11/9	Manomet	1	K. Doyon	12/11	Wellfleet	36	M. Faherty
Indigo Bunting				12/13	Plymouth	17	I. Davies
11/3	Nantucket	4	T. Pastuszak	12/15	Salisbury	30	T. Factor
11/3	Eastham	3	E. Nielsen	12/30	Orleans	20	P. Henson
11/6	Brewster	3	D. Clapp	12/31	Nantucket	20	S. Mirick
11/13	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. McCarthy	White-winged Crossbill			
11/19	Pittsfield	1	N. Mole	thr	Reports of 1-30 indiv. from 49 locations		
11/20	Squantum	1	P. Peterson	thr	Salisbury	250 max	v.o.
<b>Painted Bunting</b>				thr	P.I.	180 max	v.o.
11/25-12/28	Methuen	1 m ph	P. Seyler	11/3	WBWS	45	E. Nielsen
12/16	Boston H.	1 ph	CBC (Yusuff)	11/4	Boston (RKG)	45	R. Stymeist
Dickcissel				11/4	S. Quabbin	51	L. Therrien
11/1	Amherst	1	J. Drucker	11/10	Nantucket	85	T. Pastuszak
11/1	P.I.	1	B. Murphy	11/10	Rockport (A.P.)	34	M. Resch#
11/4	Cumb. Farms	1	J. Carlisle	11/11	P'town	70	B. Nikula
Red-winged Blackbird				11/11	W. Barnstable	50	B. Nikula
11/10	Seekonk	6000	M. Lynch#	11/13	Nahant	75	L. Pivacek
11/25	Bridgewater	2000	G. Long	11/22	Truro	110	B. Nikula
12/22	Westfield	100	M. & K. Conway	12/2	Eastham	42	M. Faherty
12/22	Southwick	30	S. Svec	12/9	Wellfleet	275	B. Nikula
Eastern Meadowlark				Common Redpoll			
11/2	Fairhaven	12	J. Sweeney	thr	Reports of 1-50 indiv. from 51 locations		
11/22	Leicester	2	M. Lynch#	thr	P.I.	180 max	v.o.
11/18	Eastham	7	M. Keleher	11/15	Concord	60	D. Sibley
12/2	Saugus	2	S. Zende	11/21	Nantucket	60	V. Laux
12/2	Cumb. Farms	16	J. Carlisle	11/22	Truro	65	B. Nikula
12/23	Rowley	1	L. Pivacek	12/9	Wellfleet	175	B. Nikula
<b>Yellow-headed Blackbird</b>				12/12	Ipswich (C.B.)	90	J. Berry#
11/18	Cumb. Farms	1	J. Trimble	12/13	Duxbury B.	175	R. Bowes
Rusty Blackbird				12/14	Hadley	150	L. Therrien
11/4	Sheffield	26	J. Drucker	12/15	Agawam	150	S. Kellogg#
11/18	Wayland	2	B. Harris	12/16	Sutton	55	M. Lynch#
11/18	Northampton	6	J. Drucker	12/19	Plymouth	90	E. Dalton#
12/15	Falmouth	3	M. Keleher#	12/19	Northampton	200	P. Desjardins
12/16	Uxbridge	4	M. Lynch#	12/23	Quabog IBA	200	M. Lynch#
12/31	Lexington	3	J. Forbes	<b>Hoary Redpoll</b>			
Brown-headed Cowbird				11/17	Easthampton	1	J. Morse
11/1	Westport	250	J. Hoye#	11/17	P.I.	1	K. Elwell
11/12	Cumb. Farms	750	N. Paulson	12/9	Duxbury B.	1 ph	R. Bowes
12/8	Southwick	100	S. Kellogg	12/15	Agawam	1	S. Kellogg#
12/22	Westfield	75	M. & K. Conway	12/16	Hadley	2	S. Sumner#

<b>Hoary Redpoll</b> (continued)				11/25	Rehoboth	26	K. Bartels
12/16	Cheshire	1	J. Pierce	11/28	Dalton	30	G. Hurley
12/16	Rockport (H.P.)	1 f	T. Spahr#	11/4	N. Truro	30	B. Nikula
12/16	Sutton	1	M. Lynch#	12/18	Concord	50	D. Swain
12/19	Plymouth	1 m	E. Dalton#	<b>Evening Grosbeak</b>			
12/26	Wilmington	1	K. Hartel	thr	Reports of 1-10 indiv. from 29 locations		
<b>Pine Siskin</b>				11/3	Rockport	17	R. Heil
thr	Reports of 1-15 indiv. from 27 locations			11/4	N. Truro	15	B. Nikula
thr	Easton	40 max	K. Ryan	11/5	Sandwich	20	J. Ghadban
11/2	W. Roxbury	20	M. Kaufman	11/5	Middleboro	20	K. Anderson
11/3	Rockport	21	R. Heil	11/6	Newbury	17	P. Brown
11/3	Chatham	40	E. Nielsen	11/8	Belchertown	20	V. Surner
11/5	P.I.	20	J. Nelson	12/29	Royalston	16	C. Floyd
11/13	Worcester	20	M. Lynch#	12/30	Granby	14	L. Rogers



GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER IN POCHET BY DAVID CLAPP

## ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Taxonomic order is based on AOU checklist, Seventh edition, up to the 53rd Supplement, as published in *Auk* 129 (3): 573-88 (2012) (see <<http://checklist.aou.org/>>).

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

## HOW TO CONTRIBUTE BIRD SIGHTINGS TO *BIRD OBSERVER*

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

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 Matt Garvey, 137 Beaconsfield Rd. #5, Brookline, MA 02445, or by email to <[mattgarvey@gmail.com](mailto:mattgarvey@gmail.com)>.

## From the Birding Community E-bulletin

### **Birds and Bees: Neonicotinoids**

Pollinator losses have come to represent a serious threat to agriculture, food availability, and food stability. In the past decade, a number of studies have implicated a class of pesticides known as “neonicotinoids” in the declines of some of these pollinator populations, including bumble bees and honey bees.

But the problem goes beyond bees. Exactly how far beyond and how seriously also needs to be addressed.

In response to widespread pest resistance and health concerns linked to older pesticides, neonicotinoids were first introduced in the 1990s. These neonicotinoid insecticides quickly rose to become top sellers. Now they are the most widely-used insecticides in the world, and it is difficult to find pest control commodities that do not contain neonicotinoids. California alone has registered nearly 300 neonicotinoid products.

Today, neonicotinoids also present a serious and lethal risk to birds at varied levels, according to a report released last month by the American Bird Conservancy. For example, birds that eat seeds coated with the insecticide can die after eating a single kernel, and the report says smaller amounts can affect reproduction. High concentrations of neonicotinoid have also been found in aquatic food chains that birds depend upon.

The American Bird Conservancy report recommends:

suspending all applications of neonicotinoids pending review of the effects on birds and other wildlife;

expanding the review of neonicotinoids beyond bees to include birds, aquatic invertebrates, and other wildlife;

banning the use of neonicotinoids as seed treatments; and

requiring registrants to develop the tools needed to diagnose poisoned birds and other wildlife.

The 96-page report, “Beyond the Bees: Assessing the Impact of Neonicotinoid Insecticides on Birds,” by Pierre Minneau and Cynthia Palmer, can be found online at: [http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/toxins/Neonic\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.abcbirds.org/abcprograms/policy/toxins/Neonic_FINAL.pdf)

You can access all the past E-bulletins on the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) website: <http://refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin/>.

## ABOUT THE COVER

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### Magnolia Warbler

With its distinctive appearance and song, the Magnolia Warbler (*Setophaga magnolia*) is well known during migration, but its preferred nesting habitat in dense conifers leaves its breeding biology poorly known. Adult males in breeding plumage are striking birds: yellow below with a black “necklace” and heavy black flank stripes and gray and black above with fused wing bars that form a contrasting white patch on each wing. The head is strikingly marked with a gray cap, a white line above the eye, and a black facemask over the yellow throat. In nonbreeding plumage the wing bars are faint, the necklace muted, and the head gray. Females in breeding plumage lack the black facemask, and their colors are generally muted. Juvenile birds lack the flank stripes but have the distinctive pattern in the tail common to all plumages: a white stripe above and a black tail tip that contrasts strongly with a white under tail and lower belly. There is little geographic variation in size or plumage, and no subspecies are recognized.

The Magnolia Warbler’s breeding range extends from eastern British Columbia across Canada south of Hudson Bay to southern Newfoundland, south across the Great Lakes to New Jersey, and in the Appalachians to western Virginia. It winters in the West Indies and from central Mexico through Panama. In Massachusetts the Magnolia Warbler is considered a common to very common migrant, especially in spring. It is a locally common breeder in the spruce and fir forests of the western half of the state. It arrives during the first two weeks of May and leaves in late August and September.

Magnolia Warblers nest in dense second-growth forests of spruce, fir, or hemlock or in mature conifers if a significant understory is present. The male’s most common song has been variously described as *sweeter sweeter SWEETEST*, *weeto weeto weeete-eet*, or *weechy weechy-weechip*. A less common song has been described as *sing sweet*. Males usually sing from treetops. Both sexes give a variety of call notes: *wenk*, *zeep*, and *chip*. The male’s song primarily functions as territory advertisement. Males defend their territories with chases and occasionally with fights against rival males and warblers of other species. They fan their tails, showing the white bands in territorial display flights. In winter they may be solitary and defend a feeding territory, or they may join mixed species foraging flocks.

During breeding season, Magnolia Warblers forage in conifer leaves or in the foliage of shrubs, usually gleaning from the undersides of leaves, but also gleaning twigs. They occasionally hawk insects or snatch them from foliage. They eat a broad spectrum of arthropods, mostly lepidopteron caterpillars, and forage extensively on spruce budworms during epidemics. They also take spiders, and during migration they may take some berries.

Magnolia Warblers are monogamous and usually produce a single brood but will renege if the first attempt fails. Both parents participate in nest building, but the female

does most of the work. The nest is a flimsy cup set on a horizontal branch or in a branch fork in a conifer, usually below ten feet. It consists of a platform of twigs topped by grass and other fine vegetation and is lined with distinctive black rootlets. The usual clutch is four white to greenish eggs blotched or spotted with red, brown, or purple. Only the female develops a brood patch and she alone incubates the eggs for the 11–13 days until hatching. The male defends the nest and territory. The young are altricial, helpless with eyes closed, and covered with only a few tufts of down at hatching. Both parents take care of nest sanitation, eating or removing the chicks' fecal sacs. The chicks fledge in 9–10 days and are fed by both parents, in one case for more than three weeks after fledging. However, little is known about the chicks in the period from fledging to first migration.

There is little data on Magnolia Warbler predation, but crows, jays, accipiters, and the usual mammalian nest predators such as red squirrels and raccoons probably prey upon them. They are also occasionally parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds. During nocturnal migrations they run a gauntlet of lighted towers and buildings. As Neotropical migrants they have been subject to loss of wintering habitat because of extensive replacement of forest with grazing habitat created for the cattle industry. Despite these problems, Breeding Bird Survey data suggest that Magnolia Warbler populations are stable and in some areas slightly increasing, so the future of these delightful wood-warblers appears secure.

*William E. Davis, Jr.*

## About the Cover Artist: Barry Van Dusen

Once again, Bird Observer offers a painting by the artist who has created many of our covers, Barry Van Dusen. Barry is well known in the birding world, especially in Massachusetts, where he lives in the central Massachusetts town of Princeton. From May 6 to June 17, 2013, Barry's work will be on exhibit at Tower Hill Botanic Gardens in Boylston, Massachusetts, and he will be the Artist-in-Residence at Tower Hill for the 2013 season.

Barry has illustrated several nature books and pocket guides, and his articles and paintings have been featured in *Birding*, *Bird Watcher's Digest*, and *Yankee Magazine* as well as *Bird Observer*. Barry is currently at work on illustrations for the second volume of *Birds of Brazil* by John Gwynne, Robert Ridgely, Guy Tudor, and Martha Argel, published by Comstock Publishing, a division of the Cornell University Press. For this work he is illustrating the shorebirds and their allies along with the gulls and terns.

Barry's interest in nature subjects began in 1982 with an association with the Massachusetts Audubon Society. He has been influenced by the work of European wildlife artists and has adopted their methodology of direct field sketching. Barry continues to enjoy teaching workshops at various locations in Massachusetts. In 2013 he will conduct workshops at Fruitlands Museums, Concord Art Association, and Tower Hill Botanic Gardens. More information on these is posted on Barry's website at <<http://www.barryvandusen.com>>.

## AT A GLANCE

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February 2013



WAYNE R. PETERSEN

The inaugural At a Glance bird for 2013 appears to be a sparrow. You know the look: streaky with a conical-shaped bill (though difficult to discern in the photo), perched in a grassy or weedy habitat and no doubt brownish in color given the streaky pattern shown by the bird in the picture. Are we ready to move forward? No, not yet. Why isn't the mystery bird a female Bobolink instead of a sparrow?

Now it's time to be more critical in our analysis of the picture. The mystery species cannot possibly be a Bobolink because its bill is way too small, its legs are far too slim, and the overall structure of the bird is way too delicate to belong to a blackbird. Otherwise, however, the mystery species bears a striking resemblance to an immature, adult female or a non-breeding plumaged male Bobolink. *Gizz* (an overall general impression) provides a useful tool for helping to separate the sparrow in the picture from the similar-looking Bobolink. For added good measure, a Bobolink would also exhibit coarser streaking on both its back and its sides, along with an unpatterned nape (note the fine spotting just barely visible below the rear portion of the cheek on the pictured bird).

Having established that the mystery species is indeed a sparrow, features to concentrate on are the broad, unmarked supercilium (i.e., eyebrow stripe) above the eye; the thin, pale median crown stripe just visible above the base of the bill; the thin dark stripes on the sides of the breast, sides, and flanks; and the relatively short tail. This combination of features at once eliminates any of the sparrow species having unstreaked underparts. The overall delicate aspect and fine-streaked appearance also serve to eliminate the chunkier, more heavily streaked Fox Sparrow and Song

Sparrow. The broad, unmarked eyebrow stripe, absence of an eye-ring, and absence of an obvious necklace of streaks help take the Savannah Sparrow and Vesper Sparrow off the table. What's left are five sparrow species in the genus *Ammodramus* (i.e., Grasshopper, Henslow's, LeConte's, Nelson's, and Saltmarsh). This genus of grassland or marshland species is characterized by small, somewhat colorful, and often difficult to observe species that generally sing rather insignificant songs.

The Grasshopper Sparrow is not a candidate since even the youngest Grasshopper is unlikely to have as much side streaking as the pictured sparrow, and it would likely exhibit an eye-ring—a feature not visible in the pictured sparrow. Grasshopper Sparrows also have noticeably heavier bills than the decidedly small bill shown by the mystery sparrow. A Henslow's Sparrow would likewise have a heavier bill, might also show an eye-ring, would display two prominent dark spots at the rear of the ear coverts, and would likely have a darker head. Only the LeConte's Sparrow and the two sharp-tailed sparrows remain as possibilities. The Nelson's Sparrow and the Saltmarsh Sparrow have solid crowns lacking the pale median stripe on the crown of the mystery sparrow. In addition, these species typically have a colorful orange triangle surrounding a gray cheek—a feature visible even in a black-and-white image. Accordingly, the combination of a pale median crown stripe, a small bill, and the absence of a triangular border around the cheek and face serve to identify the mystery bird as a LeConte's Sparrow (*Ammodramus leconteii*).

LeConte's Sparrows are rare fall migrants in Massachusetts that occasionally linger into early winter, often but not exclusively near the coast. The species seems to prefer moist weedy or grassy fields, as well as the edges of salt marshes during migration, especially if there is dense vegetation at the periphery for hiding. The author photographed the pictured LeConte's Sparrow in the Cumberland Farms fields in Middleboro on October 21, 2009. 🐦

*Wayne R. Petersen*



LONG-TAILED DUCK PAIR IN FLIGHT BY SANDY SELESKY

## AT A GLANCE

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WAYNE R. PETERSEN

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

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