

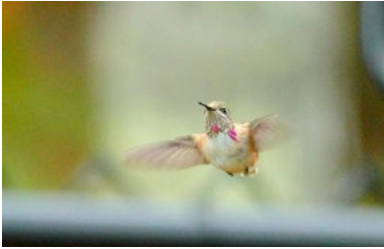
Bird Observer

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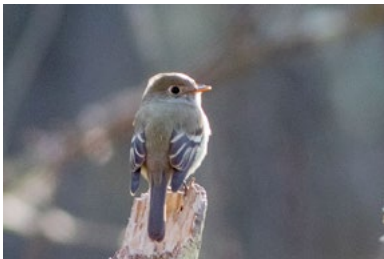


HOT BIRDS



A **Calliope Hummingbird** visiting a feeder on Cape Cod for a few days in late October was caught and banded. At the homeowner's request, its presence was not announced to the birding community until after the bird had left. Sean Williams took the photo on the left.

Chris Floyd was looking for a reported Sedge Wren near Fort Hill but instead flushed a **Yellow Rail**! Over subsequent weeks, it was photographed in flight by a few other birders. Reports of it vocalizing remain controversial. Neil Hayward took the photo on the right.



Renée LaFontaine found an Empidonax flycatcher in the Middlesex Fells which turned out to be a **Hammond's**, only the fourth state record! Neil Hayward took the photo on the left.

Immediately after *Bird Observer's* article on finding birds in Turners Falls went to press for the December issue, James Smith discovered a **Mountain Bluebird** at the Turners Falls Airport (his photo on the right).



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Cover: Long-eared Owl by John Sill ©Massachusetts Audubon Society. Courtesy of the Museum of American Bird Art.



Bird Observer

A bimonthly journal—to enhance understanding, observation, and enjoyment of birds
VOL. 45, NO. 1 FEBRUARY 2017

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Beaver Brook North Reservation

Jason Forbes

The Western Greenway is a planned loop through approximately six miles of open space through Belmont, Waltham, and Lexington. Rock Meadow and Habitat, both in Belmont, are the best known of the various pieces, but the best birding overall may be at the Beaver Brook North Reservation. The reservation features a variety of habitats, although it has minimal pond and shorebird habitat. Even with that limitation, the list of birds seen is well over 150 (see the eBird hotspot at <http://ebird.org/ebird/hotspot/L623432> for most of the records).



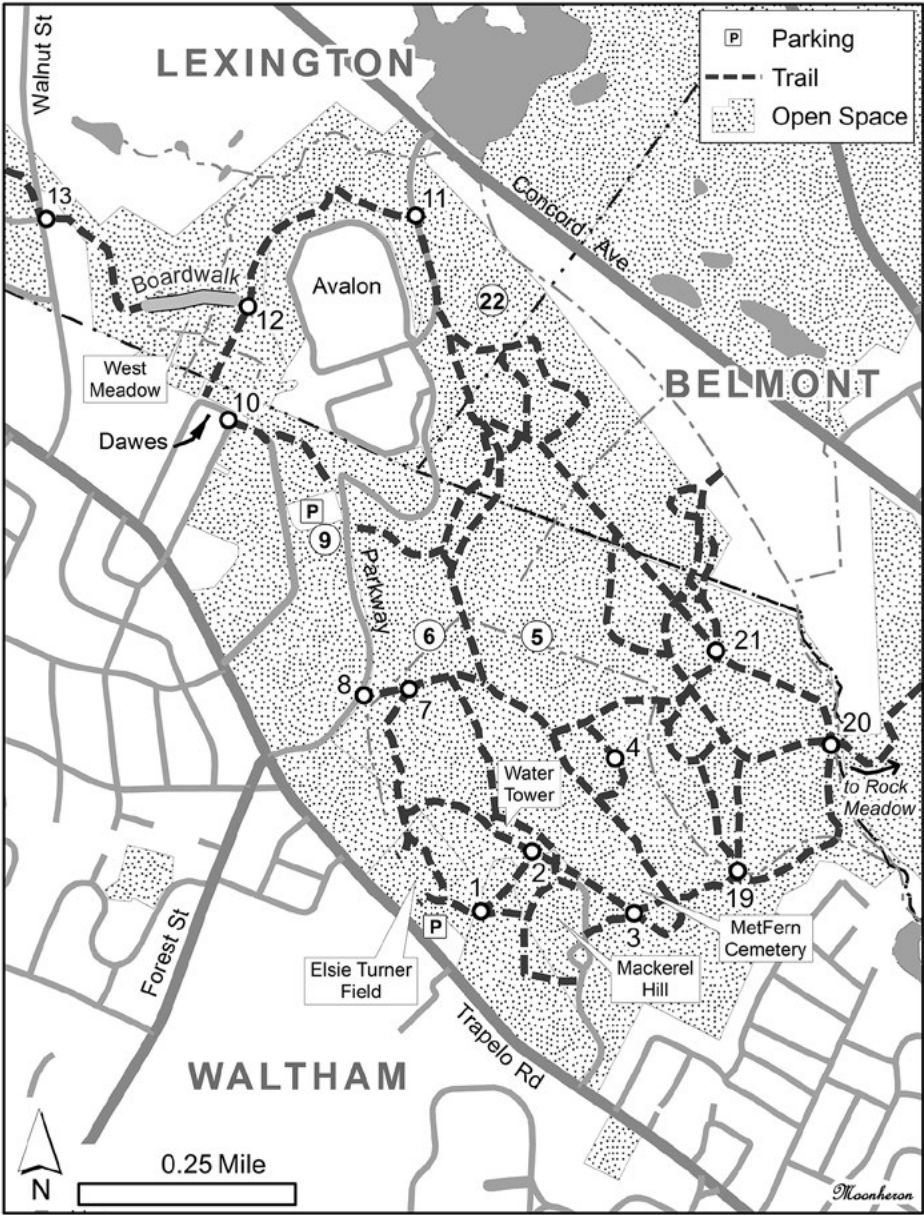
Expected breeding birds include cuckoos, Blue-winged Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and the usual forest birds, such as Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Expected wintering birds include good numbers of American Tree Sparrows, Rusty Blackbirds, Winter Wrens, and finches in flight years. During migration, expect just about anything.

The reservation is owned primarily by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) but includes several pieces of town-owned conservation land as well. It was the site of the former Metropolitan State Hospital, and many pieces of that history are still visible. Most of the buildings have either been knocked down or turned into part of the Avalon apartments, but the McLaughlin Building is still standing and the MetFern Cemetery still exists.

Beaver Brook North and the adjacent Rock Meadow are more or less bordered by Trapelo Road to the south, Mill Street to the east, Concord Avenue to the north, and Lexington and Waltham Streets to the west. There are access points from most of those streets, but the main points are along Trapelo Road in Waltham. We will start at Elsie Turner Field, which is just east of the lights with Forest Street, directly opposite the National Archives. Parking is generally possible here year-round, although the lot is not always plowed in winter and may be busy with softball or other activities in summer. From here, I will describe my typical long loop, and then will comment on some of the side trails you can take. As the trails can be confusing, I've added numbers that refer to areas on the map.

Mackerel Hill and the Woods

The first area to visit is the top of Mackerel Hill. From the parking area, take the trail that heads straight up the hill. Just before reaching the top, the path splits (1). Take the right fork and you will reach an open area. On the left side of the opening is a grove of locust trees (which is where the left fork ends), a short distance to the right are small stands of pines and birches, and the open field directly in front of you is the former site of the Gaebler children's hospital. Migrants can be found all along the edges, and a



pair or two of Blue-winged Warblers can usually be found here in summer. For several years, a Yellow-rumped Warbler or two have attempted to overwinter as well.

Work your way to the right and you'll reach an abandoned parking lot. Sparrows congregate along the edges of the lot. The field below attracts kestrels regularly. In the past, Field Sparrows appeared to breed here, but I have not seen any in summer for a few years now. Continue circling the open field. Work your way to the trees and brush below the locusts. Again, lots of migrants can be found here, as can sparrows in winter. Return to the fork in the trail (1); now follow the other path, which leads through the locusts. Take a left at the end of the trail (2). This leads to an old water tower, which now appears to be used as a cell tower. A phoebe frequently nests on the door of the little building next to the tower.

From the tower, two walking trails head north straight downhill, but I generally follow the bit of road to the right. It skirts the edge of the field and slowly works down the hill. A short distance after you pass a gate, a trail crosses your path (3) and drops down near the cemetery. About half the time I take the cross trail, and about half the time I continue on the trail I'm on, as it winds down to almost the same spot.

Whichever way you reach the bottom of the hill, take a right and follow the main path until you come to a small clearing; it can be quite productive and is worth a few minutes. Continuing east goes through the woods to Rock Meadow and will be detailed later.

For now, double back to the cemetery, which was used by both the hospital and the Fernald Center. Check the large oak in the middle; it can be loaded with birds. Then stop and read the sign for a history of the cemetery. Just beyond the cemetery is a large stand of low bushes and small trees. Although I'm frequently surprised by the lack of birds here, on occasion it can be hopping. One thing I have noticed is that it is often better slightly later in the day. Judging by the similarity of the flocks, my suspicion is that a lot of the warblers start at the top as the sun comes up and then work down the hill.

About halfway down the stand you'll reach a spot where a trail drops down to the right. At this point, you'll need to decide whether you want to take a short or a long walk. If you do not want to make the lengthy loop around the marsh that starts here, follow the trail straight and take a left at (7) to return to Turner Field. Otherwise, take the right. This drops into a small marshy area, which I tend to refer to as the middle area (4). At times, this can be a bit wet, in which case you can take a trail that cuts just inside the trees, but otherwise follow along the edge of the cattails and then climb the little hill. Check for sparrows and blackbirds. In spring, Spotted and Solitary sandpipers are somewhat regular. Both cuckoos can be heard from here, although the closest I have come to finding a nesting pair was actually along the northern section of the parkway.

After climbing the hill, turn right and enter the woods. The trail splits several times and can be confusing. I usually take a left at the first fork and then turn left at each subsequent fork.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Photograph by Sandy Selesky.

In the woods, listen for breeding birds. In spring, the vernal pool in the middle attracts Wood Ducks along with a good chorus of wood frogs. On reaching the main trail, take a left and walk until you reach the large marsh (5). The marsh has most of the expected breeders for the habitat, although I have yet to find any Marsh Wrens or rails here. In winter, Rusty Blackbirds are occasional along here. Continue beyond the marsh, where a red maple swamp starts on the left.

The main trail eventually splits. Both forks come out within a few yards of each other. If you want to go directly to the West Meadow, head right, then turn right on the parkway and follow the directions below. Otherwise, head left and then left. Before reaching the next big intersection, you pass another marsh on the right (6). At the next intersection, turn right. You will pass the trails that led down from the water tower. The next left (7) after those follows the bottom of the hill back to Turner Field. Continuing straight leads out to the Metropolitan Parkway (8). The last few feet occasionally attract Rusty Blackbirds from fall to spring, and Connecticut Warblers have been found here as well.

The Parkway

The parkway is a busy road but can be productive. Make sure you stay on the grass or the sidewalk as cars often speed around the curves. The small marsh at the edge of the Parkway often attracts sparrows. Raptors and woodpeckers frequent the trees. If there is a good layer of snow on the ground, the heat from passing cars melts the edge, which means the roadside can be extremely productive.

Working north up the parkway, you'll come to a field on the left. You can walk through here to the back of the McLaughlin building (9) or follow the parkway to the parking lot. Beyond the building are two small dog playgrounds, a basketball court, and a retention pond. Surprisingly, this area has attracted some of the most interesting rarities on the property, including Lark Sparrow and Gambel's White-crowned Sparrow. This area, along with the entire parkway, can be a good spot for displaying American Woodcock in spring.

West Meadow

At the back corner beyond the basketball court, the trail exits into the neighborhood at Dawes Avenue (10). If you walk along Dawes—please do so quietly—a trail starts on the right. This leads out to the West Meadow. In spring and after heavy rain, this trail may be flooded (often to my knees), and it may ice over in winter. If it's unpassable, you can access the West Meadow by following the parkway up toward the Avalon apartments and then down around the buildings. About halfway between the apartments and Concord Avenue, you will see a post on the side of the road (11). Cross the road to the trail, which enters the woods and loops to the West Meadow.

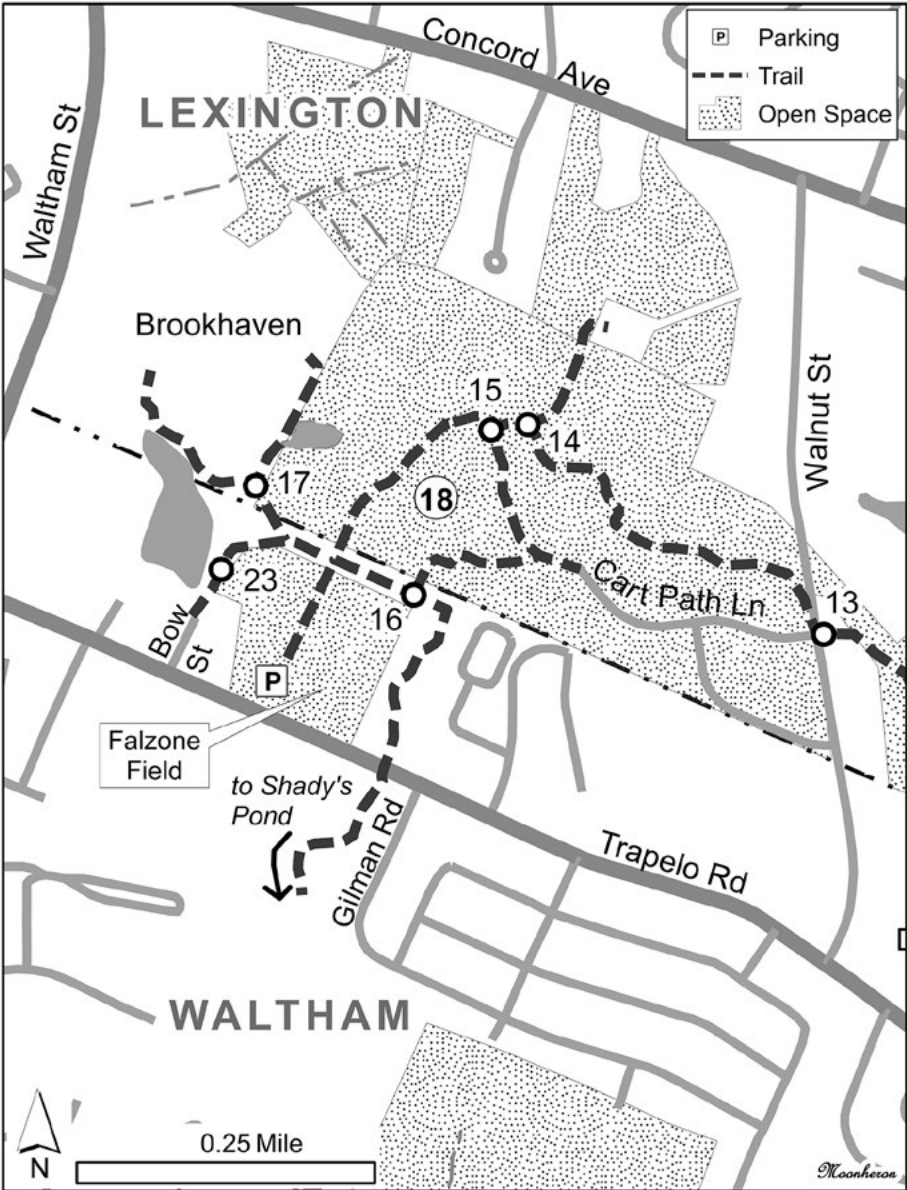
However you arrive, you will reach a long boardwalk across the marsh (12). Sparrows can be abundant. Willow Flycatchers breed here and Alders are occasional on migration, as are Marsh Wrens. The boardwalk is narrow and gets traffic from joggers and bikers, so be aware of your surroundings. Benches at the midpoint make a great spot to relax for a few minutes with an eye on the skies.

At the far end of the boardwalk, walnut trees and some bushes appear. They often have lingering migrants such as tanagers and grosbeaks well into October. Waxwings and Purple Finches like the area in winter. After crossing a second short boardwalk, the trail enters an area with taller trees and heads uphill. At the top, it opens to a small field with a few junipers and then reaches Walnut Street (13).

Lot 1

Carefully cross Walnut Street and then Cart Path Lane, staying right on the edge of Walnut Street until the trail bears left behind the houses. There were some nice weedy patches during construction, but they are now almost all gone. The trail goes through some pines—with regular Great Horned Owls and an occasional Barred Owl—before reaching another intersection (14). This part of the property is known as Lot 1. Taking a right leads up to the water tower, but outside of a busy spring day, there's not a lot to see up there. Instead, head left. At the next intersection (15), you can go either way as the trail makes a circle. Starting to the left, you will soon reach a small stand of cedars. A Saw-whet Owl roosted here one winter, and it looks like a good spot for more.

Just beyond the cedars, you can go up to the left and come out at the back of Cart Path Lane. I'm told that there will be an easement even after the remaining lots have houses built. Continuing ahead and then down to the right, you will reach another intersection (16). Head right and you will pass Falzone Field. Parking for Lot 1 is here.



The gate for the lot often doesn't open early in the morning, and maybe not at all in winter, but there are six spaces outside too.

Continue straight at the intersection that leads out to Falzone, then turn right at a subtle fork and you will reach the nature trail for the Brookhaven senior housing (17). The short trail is open to the public. A few of the residents here have feeders up, which can be worth a scan. If you take the left fork instead of the Brookhaven fork, you'll come to a spot with a view of a small pond, which is good for a few ducks and gulls and has had breeding Green Heron. The view is rather obscured compared to the view from the Brookhaven trail, but it can be a closer angle for the farther corner of the pond. The trail ends at Bow Street, which leads to Trapelo Road next to the Falzone parking lot. However, it's just as easy and birdier to retrace your steps to reenter Lot 1.

Back on Lot 1, return to the opening for Falzone and take a left. This leads to a large field (18) with more breeding Blue-winged Warblers, displaying woodcock, and other birds. In recent years, the sumac and raspberries have grown up, which makes exploring the far corners more difficult. The trail reenters the woods and shortly will finish the circle noted above.

This walk covers the main territory of Beaver Brook North Reservation. Cross back over Walnut Street and return to the parking lot at Elsie Turner Field via the boardwalk trail, Metropolitan Parkway, and the trail at the bottom of the hill (8) and (7) to Turner Field.

Side Trails

A few side trails are worth a mention. The first two begin just after the clearing around the corner from the cemetery. These interesting trails start from the same place (19). The left trail heads to the edge of the woods just north of the middle area (4). Some wet spots there have been attractive to Winter Wrens; waterthrushes have lingered late enough in the spring to raise questions about breeding. The right trail follows similar habitat to the rest of the woods but is less used by dog walkers. It rejoins the main trail almost at the bridge to Rock Meadow (20). Loop the trail and community gardens at Rock Meadow for bluebirds, Tree Swallows, and sparrows. For more on Rock Meadow, see *Bird Observer* Vol. 37, No. 5: "Fall Migration Hotspots in Massachusetts: Emphasis on Sparrows," p. 266-67 (2009).

If crossing back from Rock Meadow, staying right leads to the big marsh (5). However, well before reaching the marsh, the first trail to the right (21) is worth a short check. It follows an esker that is just below the back of the Belmont transfer station. If you're up for a small stream crossing, take a right at the end. After crossing the stream, you can walk out through a small stand of trees to get a look from the back of the marsh that is along Concord Avenue. The trail can be overgrown from here but eventually reaches Concord Avenue.

After passing the big marsh (5), more trails lead off to the right. The second follows a gas pipeline and eventually goes through a small pine stand before dropping



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Photograph by Peter Oehlkers.

into the large field that is below the parkway (22).

On the other side of the reservation, at the parking lot by the McLaughlin building (9), the sidewalk veers off to the north. If you cut across the grassy area here, you can pick up a trail that enters the woods and heads downhill. The trail runs next to a small stream—which can be attractive—before rejoining the main trail next to the smaller marsh (6).

For the adventurous, you can bushwhack out to the edge of the large marsh from this area. When the marsh is

fairly dry, it is even possible to walk out and across it.

Behind the McLaughlin building, an old road leads through a couple fields and the back of the pine stand and out to Trapelo Road. The fields can be uneven to walk through, and you will have to cross Trapelo Road to get to a sidewalk, but it can be worth the time. The parkway is a short distance down the road, so it can be looped.

At Lot 1, three side trips are worth a brief mention. At the intersection near Falzone (16), heading east follows a trail that then bends right and leads out to Trapelo Road. Waxwings can be abundant along here. Crossing Trapelo Road, the trail enters the next segment of the Western Greenway, which is Shady's Pond. I haven't explored enough to know the birding potential, but it's a beautiful walk.

Falzone Field itself can have productive edges. Sparrows and finches are abundant. Woodcocks used the field before it was turned to turf but may still be found along the fence line.

Beyond birds, the reservation is also good for a variety of other wildlife. Deer and coyote are regular, and I have seen fisher on several occasions. The fields at the top of Mackerel Hill and at Lot 1 can be productive for butterflies (50+ species) including white M hairstreak, Henry's elfin, and pepper-and-salt skipper. Dragonflies (40 species) include the state listed mocha emerald. 🦋

*One of **Jason Forbes's** earliest sightings was a Great Horned Owl on the Metropolitan State Hospital grounds. Since the hospital closed and the land was turned over to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, he has added the reservation to his local birding loop. He wants to thank the Friends of the Western Greenway, the Waltham Land Trust, Citizens for Lexington Conservation, the New England Mountain Bike Association, and many individuals for trail work and sightings.*

Birding My Patch: Daniel Boone Park in Ipswich, Massachusetts

Miles Brengle



Baker's Pond at Daniel Boone Park. All photographs by the author.

I first discovered Daniel Boone Park as a young child when my friends and I would fish at Baker's Pond. Here we caught tiny sunfish and, if we were lucky, the massive chain pickerel that we dubbed "King of the Pond." Though at this time I was interested in birds, I didn't keep any serious records besides some drawings in a spiral notebook. I do remember seeing the common birds while fishing: the crying catbirds, the ever-present Red-tailed Hawk, and even a Great Egret—a bird I wouldn't see at the park for another five years! Back then, Boone was just a mediocre fishing destination to me.

What eventually revealed the magic of this little park was a birding trip with my father one Sunday evening in May 2012. We walked around the park in the last hour before sunset, and the sun's golden rays lit everything in such wonderful light. Dozens upon dozens of red admiral butterflies fled from my footsteps on the trail, and the birds were out in full force.

Within the span of just a few minutes, I had laid my eyes on a brilliant male Scarlet Tanager, two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks trying to outsize one another, thrushes crossing the trail this way and that, and a White-crowned Sparrow that foraged in the grass exactly where I used to fish in previous years. It was this visit that turned Daniel Boone Park from a fishing getaway to a top birding hotspot.

After that exciting May visit, I didn't bird the park much until the spring of 2015 when I realized that birding only on the weekends just wouldn't cut it. I began to rise before the sun on school days in May and make the five-minute walk from my house to Boone in order to take advantage of the spring migration, oftentimes with my friend Nate Dubrow. The park is perfect for intercepting migrants on their way north: a deciduous woodland with a solid water source, all atop a large hill. I began to



Gray Catbird, probably the most ubiquitous bird in spring and summer at the park.

bird there so much before school that my eyes often sagged with fatigue as I sat in class wishing I had more time to spend at Boone. One week I birded there five mornings in a row. It was this consistent repetition of birding the same spot that taught me how valuable patch birding is.

The obvious plus about regular patch birding is the heightened chance of rarities. In that consecutive five-day span, Nate Dubrow and I were able to find a Hooded Warbler one day and a Prothonotary Warbler the next, both rare

prizes around here. In 2015, I stumbled across a singing Acadian Flycatcher right by the parking area and just this September, Nate ran into a Connecticut Warbler along Baker's Pond. But how do we have such luck with these rarities at such an insignificant location? It isn't so much a matter of luck, but rather a matter of putting in the hours. The amount of time spent *not* seeing rarities largely trumps the amount of time in which rarities are seen. By heading out there every morning, the probability of crossing paths with a rarity greatly increases.

Yet the real treat about birding a patch so regularly is all the knowledge you learn about the species within it. Through the course of my visits, I've learned when and where in the park to expect which species. Swainson's Thrush? Check the side trail off of the Baker's Pond loop in mid- to late-May. Common Nighthawk? Watch the cemetery skies at dusk and listen for their nasal "peent!" call. Still need a Tennessee or Bay-breasted Warbler? Make a visit to the western edge of Baker's Pond and check the mature oaks, for many individuals of both species have been seen there. Another interesting aspect of patch birding for me is noticing the fluctuations in populations over the course of the seasons. Take, for example, one of the most abundant species in the park, the Gray Catbird. On a good migration day in May, I'll see 15 or more on a trip to the park, but during the breeding months I tend to count eight or nine birds on my visits. Come October and November, only the stragglers remain and I'm lucky to see one.

As I learn more and more about this place, I feel the need to bird the lesser known spots of the park more extensively. The little break in the trees on the power line cut that gives a small view of the salt marsh continuously tempts me to bring a scope and look for egrets and other marsh birds. The bordering cemetery, with its sprawling view of the sky, seems to be a good place to watch for raptors even though I haven't seemed to time it right yet. This just goes to show that even in a small park like Boone, there will continue to be new places to explore and, most importantly, new birds to see. 🐦

***Miles Brengle** is a senior at Ipswich High School and birds primarily around Essex County, spending most of his time at Parker River NWR or at his local patch, Daniel Boone Park in Ipswich.*



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Bird Observer Online: Building an Online Magazine for a New England Birding Institution

Eric Swanzey

Bird Observer

VOLUME 44, NUMBER 6

DECEMBER 2016



Fig. 1. *Bird Observer* cover.

Author's Note

What follows is an abridged and slightly modified version of the Birder's Certificate Program (BCP) final project that was submitted to Mass Audubon on July 20, 2016. The original submission contained lots of colored glossy photographs with circles and arrows and a paragraph next to each one explaining what each feature was. So I took those things out, gathered together what I thought were the more valuable bits (your mileage may vary), and added some local color in an effort to urge a reader forward.

For those wondering what the BCP is all about, it's an eleven-month educational program offered by Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Educational Center in Newburyport, Massachusetts. It's a fantastic experience, as many *Bird Observer* readers can probably bear witness. But beyond the course content, classroom lecture, and field time (if that isn't enough) is the opportunity to interact and spend time as birders, with some of the most knowledgeable and friendly experts that one can find. Talk to Dave Larson, Director of the BCP program, and you'll be glad that you did.

INTRODUCTION

Once I decided I wanted to bird more intelligently, the first thing I did was subscribe to *Bird Observer*. The second was to sign up for Mass Audubon's Birder's Certificate Program (BCP). As fortune would have it, I became a volunteer for *Bird Observer* assigned to build out *Bird Observer Online*, the basis for my BCP final project. See Figure 1: Sample *Bird Observer* journal cover.

I had already been a *Bird Observer* subscriber for a little over a year. When seeking out the best resources I could find for information on the birding locales of New England, I was quickly drawn to *Bird Observer* and was a regular visitor to the website. I would often browse the site and appreciated the value of what it offered, but at the same time I was keeping a mental checklist (as I tend to do for most of the websites that I regularly visit) of features that I wished were offered. I was birding on Plum Island when *Bird Observer*'s Massbird mailing list inquiry seeking website

assistance appeared on my phone, and I immediately knew that it was a project with which I wanted to be involved.

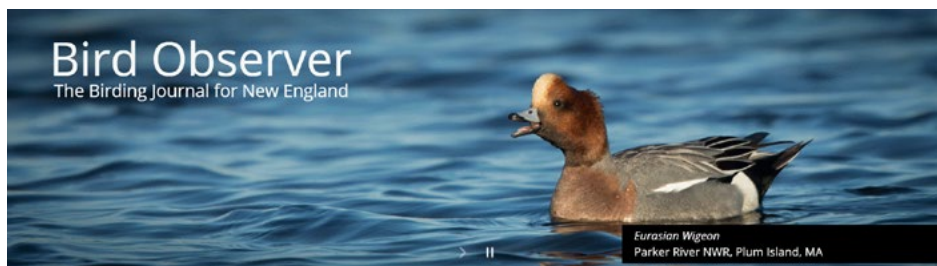
The next several weeks were filled with emails and phone calls, initially with *Bird Observer* Vice President Carolyn Marsh, but soon joined by her husband John, who manages subscriptions, and Marjorie Rines, who built and maintained the original website, as we explored the possibility of working together. This process was highly engaging and it set the tone and chemistry for everything that was to follow.

WEBSITE STATUS

The *Bird Observer* website was hitting the fifteen-year mark since its last redesign, an eternity in Internet time. When it was originally designed, mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets did not yet exist, nor did WordPress or the majority of web development platforms that are available today for building functional websites. I began an assessment and inventory of the existing website that included overall page hierarchy, content hierarchy of each page, image and file assets, and review of existing features. Typical of most “small group” websites built at the time, it was presented as a series of static pages, with access to a subscribers-only area provided via a common (single) login shared by all of the members. Despite its simplicity, it contained rich and comprehensive content. Marj Rines had authored and maintained the site in such a way that, even after many years of updates and revisions, the underlying code was clean and easy to understand. This would soon prove to make the task of content migration immensely easier than I previously anticipated.

SETTING OBJECTIVES AND ALIGNMENT OF GOALS

The formal process of planning the redesign began in July 2015 with John, Carolyn, and Marj, who composed the web steering committee. Over the course of several weeks we were in frequent contact as we defined the structure and functionality of the new website. The excitement was building as our ideas began to take shape and become tangible displays that we could all view in a web browser. When we had what we thought was a working prototype and base strategy, Wayne Petersen, then president of *Bird Observer*, joined the group. His involvement ensured that our plan aligned with the needs of the organization. It also gave us the opportunity to hear Wayne’s unique perspective on the organization and its longterm goals.



Eurasian Wigeon, Parker River NWR. All image banners and page samples captured from www.BirdObserver.org website. All photographs by the author.

THE REDESIGN PROJECT

At the core of the project was a website redesign intended to freshen up the content and reinvigorate the subscriber base. We needed to design the site to enable a true subscription model and provide for individual memberships, profiles, and logins. There was an obvious need for an ecommerce component as well to handle subscriptions. However, it quickly became clear that to achieve any measure of success or sustain it for any length of time, other factors needed to be taken into account. For example, there needed to be a way to secure content meant for subscribers only, yet offer portions of the site to anonymous visitors as an attractant to subscribing. Selected content also needed to be made available to search engine indexers or spiders, so that we could expose *Bird Observer* to a wider audience through organic search results. The site also needed to be mobile responsive — optimized for viewing on any device at any location — as another important way to increase exposure.

These modifications still fell short of providing *Bird Observer* with some important tools and features for serving the longer-term needs of the organization. Also included in the project is a publishing engine whereby multiple authors can compose content for the online version of the journal in a secure “sandbox,” then forward the article to an editor for approval, and optionally to a production manager for publishing. There is a subscription engine whereby the subscription manager can perform membership tasks, maintain subscribers, and process orders or export sales reports from the online store. An archivist is able to maintain the indexes and keep the data library updated. Similarly, any portion or aspect or feature of the website can be explicitly customized in such a manner to provide *Bird Observer* volunteers with the ability to directly maintain their particular area of responsibility or expertise.

Over the next several weeks and months, online prototypes were developed and presented in a series of milestone reviews as the new website was refined and reworked. Each new design or feature would be “roughed in” and then released to the group for review and feedback, after which revisions were made as necessary to finish out the item and proceed to the next step. Overall, the project was split into three phases, with each phase culminating in the launch of feature groupings that piggybacked on prerequisite features from a previous phase.

Phase I (est. 160 hours)—launched October 2015

The initial site launch included a full site redesign, the migration of all content to a web publishing system, design and development of a publishing platform for production of the full color online journal, production of 12 issues (two years) of existing journals in the new online format, birding maps that visually revealed and linked to the corresponding “Where to Go Birding” article in the journal, display of every listserv birding feed in New England, redesigned links and resources, a new archive section, a new ecommerce store, a membership and registration area for administering subscriptions, and a mobile responsive display that made all content available on any smart device or display.



Fig. 2. Sample Website Page. View from the base of Hellcat Tower at Parker River NWR (background), with Canvasback as seen from Stage Island Pool.

Phase II (est. 125 hours)—launched January 2016

New England Rarities was introduced, providing a quick and easy way to review and drill down against all rarities actively being seen throughout New England. A custom search engine was launched, and for the first time, a single search executed across all file boundaries and against all content sources, including the pdf content of past issues of *Bird Observer*. Search engine optimization (SEO) was addressed in an ongoing effort to elevate page rank in Google search results. A task-based operations manual was produced for use by *Bird Observer* volunteers in administering various aspects of the website.

Phase III (est. 35 hours)—launched March 2016

The remaining thirty years of archives were scanned and made available online for subscribers to view and search against, something that subscribers had been desiring for many years. With the corresponding completion of the archive index, we felt that the project had reached completion.

THE CONTEXT OF PLACE

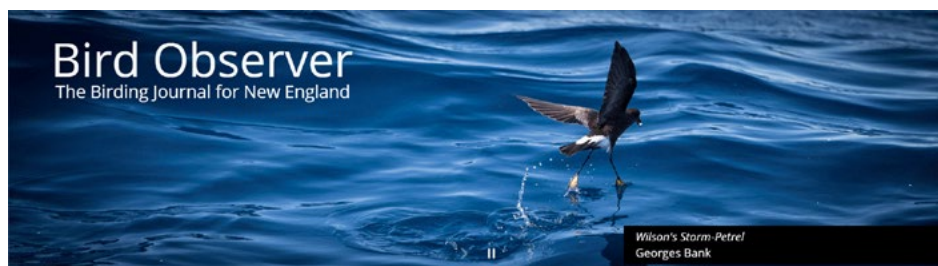
As we proceeded through Phase I of the project, a design and organizational treatment emerged that would eventually become the unifying theme under which the site was launched—New England birds in the context of place. This theme became the basis for building out the “Where to Go Birding” section of the website, and in setting up the various listserv displays for all of the New England states. See Figure 2: Sample website page.

When attention soon turned to the finer aspects of the look and feel of the website, it became an obvious choice to carry this theme into the supporting imagery of the

page design as well. Accordingly, images of birding locations are presented in the background of a page. In the foreground, high resolution images display the various species of birds that can be found at these New England locations.

THE PROJECT AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE

The sheer scope of the website project made it necessary to factor in many seemingly unrelated facets of *Bird Observer* and has led to many spirited discussions within the organization. These were beyond the obvious front-facing aspect of the end user experience on the website. For example, should subscription options expand to include digital only? Should the subscription model be altered and portions of the *Bird Observer* archive be freely offered for all visitors to the website? Is online publishing a model that complements print or will someday supplant it? Do print and digital serve the same audience or is age a determining factor on viewing preference? To ask and answer these questions I think provides *Bird Observer* continued opportunities to reexamine aspects of the organization that might benefit from revised policy as subscriber preferences change over time. My personal hope is that these two species, print and digital, will continue to thrive.



Wilson's Storm-Petrel, George's Bank.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FEATURES

- ***Bird Observer Online***: the full color online companion to the printed journal
- **Where to Go Birding**: summaries and direct links to every *Bird Observer* article ever published
- **Comprehensive Search**: query against the entire website, including content from the entire archive of every issue ever published
- Regional and Local **Bird Club Locator**
- **New England Birding listserv**: view summary or complete detail on up-to-the-minute postings from birding lists throughout New England
- **New England Rarities**: rarities displayed for every state and county in New England (powered by eBird data and AccuBirder gadgets)
- **Complete Archive**: every issue of *Bird Observer* from Volume 1, Number 1 to present day. Every issue is made available as PDF files, and every issue since

2015 is also available in full color format in an online magazine.

- **Links and Resources:** curated from throughout New England
- **Publishing Engine:** for authoring articles and composing new online issues
- **Style Guide & Reference Manual:** for use as a guide in performing website maintenance

STRATEGIES AND TECHNICAL DETAILS

Platform CMS

The question wasn't whether to use a CMS (content management system) for developing a website, but which one to choose. There are literally hundreds available – Squarespace, Weebly, Wix, XPRS, Voog, Strikingly, Yola, Webstarts, Wordpress.com, ZMoonfruit, oho, Google Sites, Webnode, GoDaddy, Jimdo, SnapPages, Vistaprint, Webs, Homestead, Angelfire, and Yola to name just a few – and winnowing down to a short list, then building small test sites on each candidate can often quickly reveal the best fit. For the *Bird Observer* website, the DNN platform was chosen. DNN is open source (the original source code is made freely available) and has a unique strength among similar CMS contenders surrounding fine-grained control of content coupled with online publishing features. This was a critical feature for serving the needs of *Bird Observer*.

Make versus Buy

A strategy that worked well in building out the website was in first seeking “best available” extensions (plugins, widgets) through reputable vendors that would come the closest to achieving a desired result or providing a desired feature. This would typically result in a feature set that meets the majority of the requirement. From there, focusing efforts on the customization of the user-facing aspect that the site visitor sees provides for a smooth and polished interface. A substantial amount of time and expense can be saved by using this approach.

Design Build

A strategy that proved extremely effective was to build out prototypes for demonstrating concepts and to test functionality. The site was designed and built “in place” on a sandboxed web server that was accessible only by the *Bird Observer* team. It was an active construction site that was available for review at all times and in all phases of the redesign. Changes or feature requests were accepted at any time throughout the process. These items would be prioritized and quickly added to the running punch list that ultimately drove the production process.

While it was at times chaotic and could at times be described as haphazard, this strategy proved to be the shortest, quickest path toward timely completion of the new website. It was also invaluable for easily illustrating concepts that were difficult to explain. It requires a solid understanding of how the various elements of a website interact and affect each other, and knowing the most efficient methods for revising an item while causing minimal disruption.

Form and Function, then Look and Feel

My approach in producing the *Bird Observer* website focused early efforts on aspects of form and function, and deferred many of the design aspect, or “look and feel,” decisions until midway into the project. In this way, we performed the heavy lifting of feature development early in the project, and it allowed for more experimentation with minimal impact to the overall timeline. Once these major components of the site were defined and in place, efforts were focused on the user interface and user experience as we wrapped everything in a consistent design treatment.

Access and Security

At the core of the website is a framework for controlling access to content and features. It is most obvious when viewing the front-facing aspect of the website as it is presented to subscribers versus non-subscribers. For example, subscribers have access to every journal ever published, while non-subscribers see only a small portion of that content. In the same vein, subscribers can search through the entire contents of every article ever published, while non-subscribers are limited to searching just the article titles. This isn’t the case for all things, as the website has many areas of the site freely available to all visitors.

There is an administration layer that operates in a similar fashion for use by the *Bird Observer* staff. John Marsh, as the Subscriptions Manager, can manage subscribers and process subscriptions; Judy Marino, as the Archivist, can manage the entire online archive. Assignments such as these can be created or revised at any time to suit the needs of the organization and can be targeted to specific tasks or objectives. For example, ad hoc “staging groups” are routinely created to give various working groups the ability to review new content before publishing. This administrative layer provides the organization the tools necessary to assign tasks to any number of interested volunteers.

Security is largely handled by the core framework that runs the website, yet that typically isn’t the area of the platform that is most prone to a hack or exploit (a form of malicious attack). The vast majority of successful website exploits occur through weaknesses in the various installed plugins or extensions. It is for this reason that the extensions in use on the *Bird Observer* website are kept to a minimum, thereby greatly reducing the attack surface and threat risk. Software patches and point releases are installed soon after being made available, as an added measure of security.

Task-based Operations Manual

A style guide and task-based operations manual was produced in tandem with the development of the website. Currently at 58 pages, this living document is used to quickly instruct a volunteer in a specific task that they might need to accomplish on the website and as a reference manual for the volunteer who might make only occasional edits or changes to the website. It was designed around the specific set of tasks involved in composing articles and bringing new issues online, and updating indexes and archives as each new issue is launched.

Migration Patterns

Google Analytics was chosen as the utility for capturing usage data and reporting on traffic patterns within the website. It is a useful tool for viewing quick snapshots of website activity and measuring website usage and spotting trends historically over time. Its reports can often prompt the creation of features, using visitor activity as a gauge for whether to expand areas of the website that visitors gravitate toward.

The Importance of History

A website's visibility within search engine listings is critical, and much attention was given to the search engine optimization (SEO) of the *Bird Observer* website in the way that it was constructed. But because the project was such a major redesign, an equally important factor was the URL history of the website pages that were being replaced. Too often, this valuable commodity is overlooked and lost in a redesign, resulting in a decrease in search engine visibility on a newly launched website. With *Bird Observer Online*, custom redirects are in place that ensure any outdated links or page requests are handled in a specific manner. Requests for outdated pages automatically redirect the visitor to the closest match within the present-day content. At the same time, the requestor (whether the browser of a human visitor or automated bot of a search engine indexer) is silently made aware of the page change, automatically updating browser bookmarks and/or search engine listings to the new page URL. The importance of this mechanism is that it migrates the historical page rank from the outdated page to the current day replacement page.



Yellow-rumped Warbler, Parker River NWR.

WITH GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

The *Bird Observer Online* project involved hundreds of hours of planning, design, and development over the course of ten months. It allowed me to finally meet and come to know some of the birders whom I had previously encountered in all sorts of interesting places – the printed pages of *Bird Observer*, live birding in the field, as a BCP student, in articles published in the *Boston Globe*, in Massbird postings, and in eBird inventories, to name just a few.

The project was made immeasurably easier due to the ongoing efforts of the *Bird Observer* staff—to Jan Heng and Regina Harrison for the vagaries of social network integration, to Christine King for proofreading, to Judy Marino for continuing work

on the archive and indexes, and to Peter Oehlkers for orchestrating the capture of the archive and ongoing production of new issues, among many others.

However, the project would have been impossible without the consistent presence of Carolyn Marsh and her steadfast optimism and encouragement; Marjorie Rines for her critical guidance and advice; John Marsh for his countless hours spent in revision and review; Marsha Salett for aligning our objectives while preserving the essence of *Bird Observer*; and finally to Wayne Petersen for marshalling all of us to a singular purpose and common goal.

As Wayne said one day after describing some of the reasons that led to the formation of *Bird Observer* over forty years ago, “This is really important stuff.” The author is inclined to agree. 🦆

Eric Swanzey formed the Swanzey Internet Group in 1997, specializing in website design, development, and hosting for midsize businesses. He is also a professional photographer, has previously owned and operated a commercial photography studio, and now specializes in super telephoto bird and nature photography. He was recognized as a Top 100 award winner in National Audubon's 2016 Photography Contest and is a recent graduate of Mass Audubon's Birder's Certificate Program. Eric is the webmaster for the Nuttall Ornithological Club as well as the webmaster and President of Bird Observer.



PINK-FOOTED GOOSE BY RICHARD JOHNSON

Twentieth Report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee

Matthew P. Garvey, Jeremiah R. Trimble, Sean M. Williams, and Marshall J. Iliff



Yellow-billed Loon, March 20, 2016, Race Point, Provincetown. Photograph by Peter Flood.

The twentieth report of the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (hereafter MARC or the committee) covers the evaluation of 63 records involving 34 species or subspecies. Sixty-two records were accepted, an acceptance rate of 97%. All accepted records in this report were accepted unanimously on the first round of voting unless noted otherwise. The 53 records noted with an “eB” were accepted via eBird in accordance with the procedure described in our bylaws for expedited review (Garvey and Iliff 2013).

Two first state records are treated in this report. Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) and Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*), bringing the total Massachusetts list to an impressive 503. Massachusetts and Florida are the only two states east of the Mississippi River with a total avian species list above 500.

The Yellow-billed Loon, found and photographed during one of many long slogs off the bountiful Race Point by the diligent and persistent Steve Arena, thankfully stayed long enough for hundreds of birders to make the long trek for a winter twitch. The Masked Booby, on the other hand, was unchaseable and seen by just one person: the astute captain Joe Huckameyer found and photographed it during a September fishing trip well offshore at Atlantis Canyon. Fortunately, Captain Joe regularly pilots

the Helen H for the BBC pelagic trips and we can all hope that those trips score discoveries of similar magnitude in the future.

Two other records treated in this report cover species that hadn't been seen in the Commonwealth in scores of years. Guillermo Rodriguez, an avid birder visiting from Spain, was checking the Waltham Street Fields on November 13, 2015, when he came upon a Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*), a species with which he was familiar after having visited other parts of the United States, but one that hadn't been seen in Massachusetts since 1973. He keenly photographed it and alerted the birding community, which proceeded to twitch the bird over the next several weeks. Unfortunately, the state's first photo-documented White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*) proved to be a one-day wonder and was seen by only a lucky few other birders during its intermittent appearances that day. Peter Flood, another intrepid and patient Race Point birder, found this breeding-plumaged adult on May 8, 2016; it represented the state's second record, the first being a sight record from Plymouth County in 1954!

Other highlights of this report include the state's third Hammond's Flycatcher and its third Smith's Longspur and first for midwinter.

The 2015–16 roster of MARC voting members included Ian Davies, Trevor Lloyd-Evans, Mark Faherty, Jessica Johnson, Blair Nikula, Tim Spahr, Ryan Schain, Scott Turner, and Jeremiah R. Trimble (chair).

In this truncated report, we present basic statistics for each record of each species or taxon covered: the record number, count of individuals, where and when the bird was seen, and who submitted evidence. We also indicate whether the evidence provided was photographic (ph.), video (v.), audio (au.), or a written submission (†). As always, the committee strongly encourages written submissions even where photographs exist. When known, we try to credit the discoverer with an asterisk (*), especially if he or she has supplied evidence. The statistics in brackets for each species or taxon show the number of individual birds accepted through records in this report, followed by the total number of MARC-accepted individual records for that species, followed by our estimate of total known records, often supplemented with a plus sign (+) when we know there are additional records but are not sure how many. We do not count or use a plus sign for 2015–2016 records that are currently in review. For a subspecies, the statistics refer to the species unless noted otherwise. Species not on the Review List do not receive a count.

Species taxonomy and nomenclature follow the seventh edition of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) *Check-list of North American Birds* (AOU 1998) and supplements (Chesser et al. 2009, Chesser et al. 2010, Chesser et al. 2011, Chesser et al. 2012, Chesser et al. 2013, Chesser et al. 2014, Chesser et al. 2015, Chesser et al. 2016). Subspecies group nomenclature follows taxonomy of *The eBird/Clements Checklist of Birds of the World* (v2016), available at <<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/clementschecklist>> (Clements et al. 2016).

The list of species reviewed by the MARC (the Review List) is available at <www.maavianrecords.com>. Please check out the full Review List and send us any evidence of new or old records you may have—even in this Information Age we can never get enough when it comes to the rarity records that keep our hearts thumping.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) [1,8,9]

2016-008: 11 at Lawrence Pond, Sandwich, *Barnstable*, 7/12/2016 [ph. G. Tanguilig*]. eB. This was a record high count for the state, exceeding the count of 9 from Ipswich in 2008 that represented the first accepted state record. Barnstable County has just one prior record from May 2015. All state records have come since 2008.

As with all Massachusetts records, these birds were of the northern subspecies *D. a. fulgens*, which is characterized by its chestnut head and breast (without a gray breastband).

Pink-footed Goose (*Anser brachyrhynchus*) [2,10,10]

2015-010: 1 at Turners Falls Power Canal, *Franklin*, 11/25/2015 [ph. J. Smith*]. eB.

2016-001: 1 at various locations near Longmeadow along the Connecticut River, Longmeadow, *Hampden*, 1/16/2016 to 2/23/2016 [ph. S. Motyl, A. Robblee*]. eB.

Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*) [1,14,14]

2015-018: 1 white morph at Plum Island, Parker River NWR, *Essex*, 11/13/2015 to 11/14/2015 [ph. P. Wood*]. eB.

Barnacle Goose (*Branta leucopsis*) [1,14,16+]

2015-013: 3 at River Road, Agawam, *Hampden*, 12/26/2015 [ph. S. Motyl*]. eB. Presumably the same birds were seen a few miles to the south in Hartford County, Connecticut, on January 3 (e.g., <<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S26648636>>).

Once viewed with a skeptical eye regarding provenance, Barnacle Geese in situations with wild, migrant Canada Geese are now routinely accepted without question. Increases in the breeding populations of all Greenland-breeding geese (including Pink-footed) have been correlated with increased occurrence of vagrants (Pink-footed, Greater White-fronted, and Barnacle) in the Northeast.

Tufted Duck (*Aythya fuligula*) [2,17,19+; males on Review List only since 2010]

2015-019: 1 at Johnson Pond, Groveland, *Essex*, 11/15/2015 to 12/8/2015 [T. and N. Walker*, ph. M. Watson]. eB.

2016-020: 1 at Kenoza Lake, Haverhill, *Essex*, 1/6/2016 to 1/25/2016 [ph. S. Mirick*]. eB.

These two records pertained to adult males and were near to each other without overlapping dates; it is likely that both records pertain to the same bird, and also that this report from eBird (not formally reviewed by the committee), also pertained to the same wandering male Tufted Duck: one on Lake Cochichewick December 18, 2015 (<<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S26353220>>).

Yellow-billed Loon (*Gavia adamsii*) [1,1,1]

2016-002: 1 juvenile at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 2/27/2016 to 4/17/2016 [† ph. S. Arena*]. Long anticipated in Massachusetts, Yellow-billed Loon had recently been found in Maine (adult on October 26 and 29 in Casco Bay), New York (three records), and Georgia, but otherwise has been fairly scarce on the East Coast despite regular occurrence in the interior of the continent.

Western Grebe (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) [1,9,11+]

2015-020: 1 at Winthrop Five Sisters, Winthrop, *Suffolk*, 2/7/2015 to 4/16/2015 [C. Jackson*, ph. D. Walters]. eB. This second record for Suffolk County proved elusive initially but was then pinned down in a consistent area where it was widely enjoyed and photographed.



Yellow-nosed Albatross, August 10, 2015, Stellwagon Bank. Photograph by François Grenon.

Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Thalassarche chlororhynchos*) [1,7,7+]

2015-017: 1 at Southwest Stellwagen Bank, *Barnstable*, 8/10/2015 [ph. † F. Grenon*]. eB. The subspecies of this bird was confirmed as the Atlantic subspecies, *T. c. chlororhynchos*, identifiable by the gray hood; all North American records have represented this form, split as a species by some authorities.

Masked Booby (*Sula dactylatra*) [1,1,1]

2015-023: 1 subadult at West Atlantis Canyon, 9/10/2015 [ph. J. Huckameyer*].

Although Masked Booby is a regular, almost annual visitor to Gulf Stream waters off North Carolina, it is surprisingly scarce as a vagrant north of there. It has been recorded in Virginia and New Jersey (Island Beach SP, August 24, 2001), but this Massachusetts record was apparently the first record north of there. Since this record, there have been two additional records from the mid-Atlantic: New Jersey got its second record at the Avalon Seawatch on October 15, 2015, and Maryland's first was found on a pelagic trip near Baltimore Canyon on August 21, 2016.

American White Pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) [3,23,28+]

2015-022: 1 at Plum Island, Parker River NWR, *Essex*, 11/16/2015 [ph. S. Sullivan*]. eB.

2015-024: 1 at Pochet Island, Orleans, *Barnstable*, and shortly thereafter at Cotchpinicut Road Landing, Chatham, *Barnstable*, 11/15/2015 [ph. B. Lagasse*, ph. P. Trimble]. eB.

2015-021: 2 at Fort Hill, Eastham, *Barnstable*, 12/4/2015 [ph. S. Barnes*, ph. L. Mack*].

Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) [2, 8, 22]

2015-026: 1 adult at South Beach, Chatham, *Barnstable*, 8/31/2015 [ph. M. Malin*]. eB.

2015-029: 1 adult at Low Beach, Siasconset, *Nantucket*, 1/1/2015 [ph. V. Laux*]. eB.

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) [8,23,22+]

2015-030: 1 adult at Kettle Island, Manchester-by-the-Sea, *Essex*, 5/22/2015 [S. Perkins*, ph. R. Schain]. eB.

2015-031: 1 adult at Clark Pond, Manchester,-by-the-Sea, *Essex*, 5/15/2015 [ph. D. Brewster*]. eB.

2015-032: 1 adult at Route 1A Salt Pans, Rowley, *Essex*, 5/16/2015 to 5/18/2015 [ph. M. McCarthy]. eB.

2015-034: up to 3 adults at Argilla-Northgate-Essex Road Fields Complex, Ipswich, *Essex*, 4/6/2015 to 4/15/2015 [ph. G. Power*]. eB.

2016-009: up to 3 adults at Hamlin Reservation, Ipswich, *Essex*, 4/24/2016 to 4/30/2016 [ph. M. Goetschkes*, S. Grinley*]. eB.

2015-033: 1 adult at Chebacco Woods, South Hamilton, *Essex*, 4/23/2015 [ph. D. Walters*]. eB.

2016-010: 1 adult at Route 1A Salt Pans, Rowley, *Essex*, 5/1/2016 to 5/8/2016 [ph. D. Prima, P. Vale*]. eB.

2016-011: 1 adult at Parker River NWR Salt Pannes, *Essex*, 6/20/2016 to 6/27/2016 [T. Bradford*, ph. J. Nathan]. eB.

The accepted records above are all from a fairly limited area of northeastern Essex county, where *Plegadis* ibis regularly move between the Kettle Island breeding colony and feeding areas in Ipswich, Rowley, and nearby towns. Surely, there is much duplication involved, with the same individuals being seen at different sites, but a minimum of three were present in both years given 2015-034 and 2016-009.

Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) [2,13,13+]

2015-035: 1 at Madaket area (Sanford Farm, Clark Cove, etc.), Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 7/1/2015 to 7/3/2015 [S. Fee*, ph. R. Stevenson*]. eB. July records are comparatively few for the Commonwealth, vastly outnumbered by May and June records.

2015-036: 1 or 2 at Truro area (Pilgrim Heights to Prince Valley, *Barnstable*, 4/18/2015 [ph. P. Flood*, B. Nikula*]. eB.

Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinicus*) [2,9,56+]

2015-054: 1 juvenile at Westborough WMA, Chauncy Pond, Westborough, *Worcester*, 10/21/2015 to 10/22/2015 [ph. J. Lawson*]. eB. This was the third record for Worcester County.

2015-055: 1 juvenile at Burrage Pond WMA, Hanson, *Plymouth*, 11/8/2015 [ph. E. Vacchino*]. eB.

Bridled Tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*) [3,12,24]

2015-038: 1 first-summer photographed on the BBC Pelagic at 40.55308,-69.302396, *Nantucket*, 8/22/2015 [ph. N. Bonomo]. eB.

2015-037: 1 second-summer at Smith Point, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 7/11/2015, and Tuckernuck Island, *Nantucket*, 8/19/2015 [ph. L. Dunn*]. eB.

2016-012: 1 first-summer at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 7/9/2016 [† ph. S. Arena*]. eB.



White-winged Tern, May 8, 2016, Race Point, Provincetown. Photograph by Peter Flood.

White-winged Tern (*Chlidonias leucop-terus*) [1,2,2]

2016-006: 1 adult in alternate plumage at Race Point and Hatches Harbor, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 5/8/2016 [ph. † S. Arena, ph. P. Flood*]. First *Barnstable* record and first for Massachusetts since 1954, when two spent three days over Musquashicut Pond, *Plymouth*, on the remarkably similar dates of May 25-27 (Veit and Petersen 1993). One of these two birds similarly was in breeding plumage.

Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*) [3,13,13+]

2015-039: 1 at Nauset Beach, South End, Orleans, *Barnstable*, 8/16/2015 to 8/19/2015 [ph. D. Hollie*]. eB.

2016-013: 1 at Race Point, Provincetown, *Barnstable*, 6/18/2016 [ph. P. Flood*]. eB.

2015-040: 1 at Nauset Marsh, Eastham, *Barnstable*, 7/10/2015 [ph. K. Schopp*]. eB.

Although both North American *T. s. acuflavidus* and Eurasian *T. s. sandvicensis* have been known to occur in the Bay State, separation of non-juveniles is extremely difficult and the subspecies is considered unestablished for these individuals.

Common Ground-Dove (*Columbina passerina*) [1,2,2]

2015-028: 1 at Waltham St. Fields, Lexington, *Middlesex*, 11/13/2015 to 12/3/2015 [ph. G. Rodriguez*, ph. J. Trimble]. A surprising second state record and first Middlesex record, with the previous record from Monomoy Island in 1973 (Petersen 1995). During this same period there were a couple of other ground-doves well out of range in the Midwest (e.g., Chicago, Illinois, and Marquette, Michigan). The day of this bird's discovery was an epic fallout of Franklin's Gull (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*) across the East.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*) [2,23,35+]

2016-014: 1 at Lanesville Community Garden/High Street, Lanesville, *Essex*, 5/28/2016 to 5/29/2016 [ph. S. Sullivan*]. eB.

2015-041: 1 at Nauset Heights Road, Orleans, *Barnstable*, 11/13/2015 [ph. N. Villone*]. eB.

Black-chinned Hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*) [2,6,7]

2015-026: 1 immature female at Downer Avenue, Boston, *Suffolk*, 11/4/2015 to 11/24/2015 [v. C. Gatham*, v. M. Garvey, ph. M. Iliff]. First record for Suffolk and first away from Cape Cod and the Islands since the first record—a Cohasset specimen from way back in November 1979 that has yet to be formally reviewed by MARC.

2015-027: 1 immature female at Little Shaver Lane, Harwich, *Barnstable*, 11/30/2015 to 12/2/2015 [ph. † S. Finnegan, D. Meyer*, ph. S. Williams]. Second record for Barnstable.

Rufous Hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) [2,33,33+]

2015-042: 1 adult male at Cedarcrest Road, Canton, *Norfolk*, 7/22/2015 to 7/24/2015 [ph. L. Waters]. eB.

2015-043: 1 adult male at Castle Hill Avenue, Great Barrington, *Berkshire*, 10/11/2015 to 10/12/2015 [ph. G. Ward*]. eB.

Crested Caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) [1,4,6]

2015-008: 1 at Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, South Wellfleet, *Barnstable*, 5/8/2015 [† J. Keyes*] (second round, 8-1). While submitted as a sight-only record of two birds, eight committee members felt details of the second bird were too scant to accept, but felt comfortable in the detailed description of one bird. One committee member felt the casual description of the putative second bird, as well as the observer's apparent lack of appreciation for the rarity of this species this far north—heck, Georgia just got its first record in 2016—calls the whole record into question. Additional 2015 records from Westport and Lancaster are still to be reviewed.

Hammond's Flycatcher (*Empidonax hammondi*)[1,2,4]

2016-003: 1 at Egypt Lane, Fairhaven, *Bristol*, 1/1/2016 to 1/2/2016 [v. M. Garvey, ph. au. M. Iliff, ph. J. Trimble, ph. D. Zimerlan*]. First Bristol record. Massachusetts's

first record from Wellesley in 1988 has yet to be formally reviewed by MARC, and a fourth record from November 2016 in Medfield is currently under review.



Say's Phoebe, September 9, 2015, Esther Island, Nantucket. Photograph by Lee Dunn.

Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) [3,9,10+]

2015-045: 1 at T-Time former golf range, Eastham, *Barnstable*, 10/10/2015 [ph. B. Lagasse*, M. Malin*, K. Yakola*]. eB.

2015-046: 1 at Esther Island, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 9/7/2015 [ph. L. Dunn*]. eB.

2015-047: 1 at Keith Farm, Chilmark, *Dukes*, 9/8/2015 [ph. K. Magnuson*]. eB.

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) [4,22,30]

2015-044: 1 at Squam Farm, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 11/25/2015 to 11/28/2015 [ph. G. Andrews*]. eB.

2015-057: 2 or 3 at Waring Field/Lanes Farm Way, Rockport, *Essex*, 12/4/2015 to 12/26/2015 [ph. S. Williams*]. eB.

2015-058: 1 at Manomet, *Plymouth*, 12/26/2015 to 1/4/2016 [ph. B. Harrington]. eB.

2015-059: 1 at Danehy Park, Cambridge, *Middlesex*, 12/28/2015 to 1/6/2016 [ph. J. Forbes]. eB.

Although the state has many December records, few have extended to January like the two in 2016 covered here.



Fork-tailed Flycatcher, June 7, 2016, Bear Creek Sanctuary, Saugus. Photograph by Soheil Zendehe.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*) [1,8,19+]

2016-018: 1 at Bear Creek Sanctuary, Saugus, *Essex*, 6/7/2016 [ph. S. Zendehe]. eB.

Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) [1,11,11+]

2015-050: 1 at Wachusett Reservoir - Gate 36 to 40 (North Dike), Clinton, *Worcester*, 10/1/2015 to 10/6/2015 [ph. J. Lawson*]. eB.

Mountain Bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*) [1,10,10]

2015-053: 1 female at Crane WMA, Falmouth, *Barnstable*, 12/4/2015 to 3/22/2016

[ph. G. Hirth*]. eB.

Townsend's Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*) [2,20,20+]

2015-048: 1 at Corn Hill, Truro, *Barnstable*, 12/22/2015 to 1/14/2016 [ph. B. Lagasse, M. Malin*]. eB.

2015-049: 1 at Halibut Point, Rockport, *Essex*, 11/12/2015 to 11/22/2015 [ph. T. Bradford*]. eB.

Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*) [1,15,15+]

2016-018: 1 at 3 Dakota Trail, Rutland, *Worcester*, 1/1/2016 to 1/3/2016 [ph. A. Robblee]. eB.

Smith's Longspur (*Calcarius pictus*) [1,3,4]

2015-025: 1 at Bear Creek Sanctuary, Saugus, *Essex*, 12/21/2015 to 1/20/2016 [ph. M. Iliff, ph. S. Zende]. The third for the state and for Essex County came barely a year after the second. Since both previous records are from October, this individual represented Massachusetts's first for midwinter, although one of Maine's two records was also from the winter.



Smith's Longspur, January 20, 2016, Bear Creek Sanctuary, Saugus. Photograph by Oliver Burton.

Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) [3,10,10+]

2015-051: 1 at Hellcat Area, Plum Island, *Essex*, 9/19/2015 to 9/26/2015 [E. Lipton*; ph. S. Williams]. eB.

2015-052: 1 at Scusset Beach State Reservation, Sandwich, *Barnstable*, 11/29/2015 to 12/2/2015 [ph. M. Keleher*]. eB.

2016-015: 1 at Rowley, *Essex*, 1/30/2016 to 1/30/2016 [ph. M. Goetschkjes]. eB.

Painted Bunting (*Passerina ciris*) [2,16,16+]

2016-016: 1 adult male at a private feeder, Nantucket, *Nantucket*, 1/29/2016 to 2/19/2016 [ph. G. Andrews, C. Witte*]. eB.

2016-017: 1 female/immature off Old County Road, Wellfleet, *Barnstable*, 1/31/2016 to 2/1/2016 [ph. K. Yakola]. eB.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon) (*Junco hyemalis* [oreganus Group])

2015-005: 3 at Elm Street, Hatfield, 2/3/2015 to 2/12/2015. (3–6, 2nd round). While interesting, photos of a trio of juncos at a feeder failed to convince a majority of

voters that any were outside the range of variability in Slate-colored Juncos, and the record failed to survive a second-round vote. 🐦

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PHOTO ESSAY

MARC Highlights



(Top) Common Ground-Dove,
November 23, 2015, Waltham
Street Fields, Waltham.
Photograph by Ryan Schain.

(Left) Hammond's Flycatcher,
January 1, 2016, Egypt Lane,
Fairhaven. Photograph by
Henry Zimmerlin.



(Top) Mountain Bluebird.
January 2, 2016, Crane
Wildlife Management Area,
Photograph by Tom Murray.

(Right). One of two Ash-
throated Flycatchers,
December 4, 2015, Lane’s
Farm Way, Rockport.
Photograph by Sean M.
Williams



MUSINGS

Solitude

Martha Steele



Snow Geese, Dead Creek WMA from Gage Road, Addison Vermont. Photo by Bob Stymeist.

It was late afternoon on an early November day as we traveled south on the western slopes of the Green Mountains of Vermont, passing rich farmlands, rising and falling on the gently rolling road. Off to the west and beneath our moving perch were Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains of New York. The sky was heavily overcast with dark clouds, but the western horizon cleared and the setting sun shone through the cracks. Suddenly, the previously muted landscape dazzled with stunning swaths of low-angle sunlight cutting through the dusk of the coming evening. The sun illuminated the brilliant colors of maples, birches, and beeches, with a generous sprinkling of deep green coniferous highlights. This was a *Vermont Life* moment if ever there was one: the unexpected beauty left us awestruck and silent with wonderment.

What does this have to do with birding? There were no birds in this spectacular scene, but if it were not for our love of birds, we may have never experienced the beauty of the afternoon. We were headed for our destination of the night, and our trip was to bird the Champlain Valley of Vermont. This was a reminder that birding is not just for the birds: it is as much about communing with nature in general, finding peace, solitude, beauty, and joy in the environments that we visit to find birds.

Often, our birding experiences are as much about our connection with the natural world as a whole as it is about seeing or hearing the birds. A spring walk in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge features beautiful blooming trees and other plants, and offers soothing calm during an evening stroll in addition to the joys of welcoming our migrant birds back. A winter trip to Halibut Point on the North Shore can leave us mesmerized at the sound and fury of the crashing waves that carved rocks across the millennia while we also admire the regal colors of the Harlequin Ducks. A pelagic trip off the New England coast can delight us with a pod of dolphins playing at the bow of the boat in between sightings of rafts of resplendent seabirds. A hike up Mount Greylock in the Berkshires may produce many breeding birds but also yields vistas not easily matched elsewhere in Massachusetts, and sometimes an encounter with a black bear.

Many birders often bird by themselves for their daily outings. That means that we often experience the outdoors in solitude and can take solace in what our surroundings offer us. When walking in the woods, I revel in the crunching leaves beneath my feet, the low groans of creaking trees and branches from gusty winds, and sounds of life all around me as I walk. I hear an animal running away in the forest, startled by my approach and wonder what it was. I jump at the sudden explosion of sound of a flushed Ruffed Grouse merely yards away. I hear the squirrels and chipmunks, and the spring peepers in season. I hear the crickets in the fields, and other insects buzzing around my head, some annoying and some just passing by. I feel the warmth of the sun and the cool of the autumn rain.

Why is it that I find the outdoors calming? Why do I feel connected to the land, and why do I talk to the inhabitants of our forest and meadows? Maybe it is a refuge from the real world, a cocoon against the challenges and difficulties we face as a species. Or perhaps it reminds me of the earth from which we rose and to where we will return, ever aware that I belong to but one of millions of species on earth. Being outdoors, particularly deep in our northern forests, gives me a profound sense of grounding and connection, and presents me with a multitude of tapestries that the human mind could hardly imagine without seeing them unfold before us.

Over 20 years ago, I was privileged to spend a week of rafting on the San Juan River in Utah with noted natural history writer Ann Zwinger. She was an astute observer of the outdoor world and a fervent environmental conservationist. Among the many notable quotes from her writings was the following: “The life of the wood, meadow, and lake go on without us. Flowers bloom, set seeds and die back; squirrels hide nuts in the fall and scold all year long; bobcats track the snowy lake in winter; deer browse the willow shoots in spring. Humans are but intruders who have presumed the right to be observers and who, out of observation, find understanding.” (http://www.azquotes.com/author/23645-Ann_Zwinger)

“...who, out of observation, find understanding.” Perhaps this is one of the reasons that the natural world draws me in. It sustains my curiosity, is always ripe for observation to better understand, often yields transcendent beauty and surprising twists, and gives perspective on the miniscule fraction of time that I am part of it. Perhaps,

too, this short phrase has meaning far beyond the natural world into all aspects of our lives, possibly more so now than ever before in our contentious world. I have long been immersed in the natural world, but becoming a birder in my adult years has only intensified my love and appreciation for the complex ecological web among all living species. In my imperfect ways, I try to be a good steward of the land and a friend to our earth and its inhabitants.

My birding forays therefore are not only to enjoy our birds but also to appreciate the sights, sounds, smells, and touches of whatever else awaits me at any given moment. I am humbled by how little I know but grateful to have experienced so much across the globe, both before and after I started birding: the endless plains of the Serengeti, the unique landscape of southern France, the rich rain forests of Central America, the wildness of the Brooks Range in Alaska, the solitude of the northeastern hardwood forest, the serenity of northern Minnesota lakes, the pastel canvas of the western canyonlands, and much, much more. Birds were a part of these scenes but most certainly not the only highlight. So, when you do not see the birds you are looking for, take a moment and let the natural world sink in to your core. Slow down, look around, and listen up. There is so much to observe to find understanding. 🐦

Martha Steele, a former editor of Bird Observer, has been progressively losing vision due to retinitis pigmentosa and is legally blind. Thanks to a cochlear implant, she is now learning to identify birds from their songs and calls. Martha lives with her husband, Bob Stymeist, in Arlington. Martha can be reached at <marthajs@verizon.net>.

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GLEANINGS

False Advertising

David M. Larson



Black-footed Albatross chick with plastics. Photograph by Dan Clark/USFWS. CC BY-NC 2.0

Everyone knows that plastic debris is a blight on the landscape throughout the world. But the situation is also dire in the oceans where micro and macro plastic debris abound. One of the more grim end products of this marine plastic debris is the mortality of adult and young seabirds due to ingestion of plastic. Seeing the remains of an albatross chick filled with indigestible plastic is wrenching. But why do the birds consume plastic debris, and why has this problem been increasing? The increase may be due to more and more small plastic debris in the marine environment, some of which may look like food and some of which may not. But what if it actually smells like food?

Plastic particles make excellent substrates for growth of marine organisms. When phytoplankton grow on the plastic, they attract zooplankton. When zooplankton graze on phytoplankton, volatile dimethyl sulfide (DMS) and its precursor dimethylsulfoniopropionate (DMSP) are released, and those odorant compounds act as infochemicals, triggering foraging in marine organisms. Many species from zooplankton to whales react to these infochemicals in a trophic cascade. One of the most sensitive groups is the tubenoses—seabirds in the order Procellariiformes. Procellariiforms such as albatrosses, shearwaters, and petrels use volatile compounds to locate food in the open ocean, and many have been shown to use DMS to find feeding hotspots. If plastic bits in the ocean provide substrate for growth of phytoplankton and

emit DMS and DMSP, then that might explain the attraction of indigestible plastics to these seabirds.

Savoca and coworkers (Savoca, et al., 2016) tested this potential trophic cascade by a series of experiments. First, they exposed virgin plastic spheres to an oceanic environment in the photic zone for three weeks, and then they tested the spheres for DMS. Using gas chromatography, there was no detectable DMS coming from samples of virgin high-density polyethylene, low-density polyethylene, or polypropylene beads. However, the marine-exposed bead samples of all three plastic types emitted DMS at concentrations detectable by procellariiforms.

The authors then did a meta-analysis of 55 studies on 25 species of procellariiforms and found a statistically strong relationship between DMS sensitivity and consumption of plastic by these birds. They went on to mathematically model this relationship, which suggested that DMS-sensitive species ingest plastic five times as frequently as nonsensitive species. There is a strong positive relationship between DMS-sensitivity and birds that nest in burrows, as opposed to those that nest on the surface, so the authors used burrow-nesting as a proxy for DMS-sensitivity. This expanded their analysis to 62 procellariiform species. Within this expanded species set, model analysis suggested burrow-nesting tubenoses ingested plastic three times more frequently than surface-nesting species, roughly consistent with the meta-analysis.

This study suggests that DMS-sensitive, tubenosed seabirds are particularly susceptible to ingesting plastic in the marine environment because of the aroma of DMS from the phytoplankton that grows on the plastic. Mediation efforts might be aimed at reducing the plastic load in the oceans—estimated in 2014 at over 250 million metric tons—or at producing plastics that do not support phytoplankton growth. Clearly the problem of plastic ingestion is not limited to seabirds, since many studies have raised the alarm over the increased plastic load in marine fish, marine mammals, and sea turtles. Other studies have demonstrated the importance of DMS in foraging cascades in marine organisms from zooplankton to cetaceans. Seabirds are perhaps the most at risk, with clear negative consequences due to gastrointestinal obstruction and chemical toxicity.

Finally, I found the collaborations in this study to be perfect, pairing biologists with the Department of Viticulture and Enology, all at University of California Davis. It all comes down to the volatiles and the bouquet. 🐦

Reference

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FIELD NOTES

Great Egrets Foraging on Terrestrial Invertebrates in Everglades National Park, Florida

William E. Davis, Jr.



Figure 1. Great Egret foraging for terrestrial invertebrates along Anhinga Trail. All photographs by the author.

On January 31, 2016, I visited Anhinga Trail in Everglades National Park, Florida. The water level was the highest I had ever seen there and few herons were present. At about 11:00 am, I noticed a Great Egret foraging in dry habitat near the path at the interface between short grass and tall grass and shrubbery. It was alternately using Walking Slowly and Stand and Wait foraging behaviors. I spent 20 minutes watching the Great Egret and I counted at least four attacks in which insects—or other terrestrial prey—were taken from the low shrubs and grass. In one case, the orange wing of what I am sure had been a grasshopper was displayed during ingestion. The foraging behavior included the bird slowly walking by the low shrubs with its neck held forward and with the bill slightly raised above the horizontal (Figure 1). It swayed its neck back and forth while keeping the head and bill stationary, but sometimes moved its head side to side as well. The side-to-side movement is thought make use of the parallax phenomenon to provide the bird with a precise estimate of the strike distance to prey (Kushlan 1978, Hancock and Kushlan 1984). The egret was visually foraging and, when an insect was located, it struck with the usual lightning bill thrust.

About 3:00 pm, I located a Great Egret foraging in exactly the same way at Eco Pond at Flamingo. This pond is some 33 miles away from Anhinga Trail and thus this



Figure 2. Great Egret strikes at a terrestrial invertebrate at Eco Pond.

egret was almost certainly a different bird. I followed this egret for about 10 minutes and observed the same stealthy walk with head and neck held forward and bill slightly raised, as well as the neck and sometimes side-to-side head movement I had seen with the first bird. I photographed it striking at an insect and holding prey in its bill (Figures 2, 3). On the drive back from Flamingo to the park entrance, I counted four more Great Egrets that, in brief observations, also appeared to be foraging for terrestrial invertebrates in a similar manner. I saw few Great Egrets out in the wet habitats; more than half the birds I saw during the day were foraging in terrestrial habitat.

Great Egrets mostly forage in aquatic habitats and their primary prey consists of fish. In one study, fish constituted 95% of prey and 98% of prey weight. Invertebrate prey included primarily aquatic invertebrates but also terrestrial insects including dragonflies, damselflies, and grasshoppers (McCrimmon et al. 2001). Another study added dung beetles and earthworms (Schlorff 1978). Clearly, terrestrial invertebrates usually contribute but a tiny fraction of the Great Egret diet. If so, why did I encounter so many Great Egrets foraging in terrestrial habitats even though they were surrounded by a sea of water and sawgrass, their traditional foraging environment? The answer probably lies in the weather events that dominated South and Central Florida during January 2016. A brief Internet survey indicated that El Nino-influenced storms produced nine inches of rain in January, about five times the historical average, in what is usually the heart of the Florida dry season. It was the wettest January since 1932 (South Florida Water Management District News Release, February 1, 2016), resulting in high water levels across South and Central Florida including Everglades National Park. Conditions were so bad that Lake Okeechobee threatened to flood the area. Hence, the federal authorities lowered the lake level with a resulting increase in water levels in parts of Everglades National Park.



Figure 3. Great Egret with a prey item in its bill at Eco Pond.

Studies have indicated that Great Egret numbers tend to decrease when water depths exceed 8–16 inches and that their distribution in the Everglades is tightly linked to water depth (McCrimmon et al. 2001). Thus it seems likely that high water levels forced the Great Egrets out of their usual feeding sites and caused them to shift to foraging in terrestrial habitats. I suspect that the high water levels may also have led to a wide dispersal of small fish and that the resulting low density of prey fish may also have influenced the Egrets' shift to an insect diet. 🦋

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Rose-breasted Grosbeak Chase

Sandy Selesky

On May 10, 2016, I decided to check out the status of two soon-to-fledge young owlets in their nest in a tall pine tree behind the main headquarters at Maudsley State Park in Newburyport. I was also hoping to be able to photograph a Rose-breasted Grosbeak, since I had seen a male nearby a couple of times on previous visits to the owl nest. I arrived in the late afternoon and met another photographer friend



Rose-breasted Grosbeak. Photograph by the author.

there. We did see the two owlets in their nest, although I was told they had actually been branching out earlier in the day so clearly they were starting to get ready to leave. As we were walking around the pine trees in the back I heard a grosbeak singing and looked up in time to see a male high above me. I took a few pictures, and then he flew across the street to a tree near the parking lot and back again to another tree near the beginning of the main path leading into the park. I had to lie on my back to get pictures of him as he sat high up on a tree branch singing and posing for me.

Suddenly, as my friend was trying to find a position to also get some pictures, the grosbeak flew out of the tree and within seconds was joined by three more grosbeaks. They zoomed quickly past us toward the field, turned around, and I looked down in surprise as they circled around the lower part of my legs and then flew a bit farther off again, flying faster and faster until a few seconds later all four of them landed about 15 feet from us on a stone wall at the side of the road. My friend and I were too shocked to get any pictures while they were zooming around or circling my legs, unfortunately. It was too incredible an experience! It seemed that three male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were chasing one female, hoping to gain her affection in order to mate with her. When they landed on the stone wall, the three males displayed and seemed to yell at one another.

After a second or two they all took off and the female flew to a crab apple tree alone. I never saw who wound up winning her affections. Since my lens was too big to capture the entire scene, the only image I managed to get was just one of a single male doing his display on the stone wall! 🐦

ABOUT BOOKS

What's a Wren Worth?

Mark Lynch

Why Birds Matter: Avian Ecological Function and Ecosystem Services.

Edited by Çağan H. Şekercioğlu, Daniel G. Wenny, and Christopher J. Whelan. 2016. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

How much do you spend on birds on a weekend? Over the course of a year? Factor in the cost of gas, food, and your time, as well as the cost of field guides, binoculars, scopes, and items like classes and out of state trips. If you sit down and actually attempt this seriously, the dollar total may surprise you. But beyond the obvious cost of birding, what is the experience of looking at birds worth to you? “Priceless” is not an acceptable answer. Try and actually put a figure on it. What dollar amount would you accept in exchange for a weekend trip to Plum Island in September or Quabbin Park in May? These are not frivolous questions. This simple exercise gets to the heart of the meaning of one small and simple aspect of the term “ecosystem services.” The new book ultimately asks what are birds worth to humans and to the environment.

Why Birds Matter is a scholarly collection of papers collected by the three editors/authors. Çağan H. Şekercioğlu is a professor in the Department of Biology at the University of Utah. Daniel G. Wenny is a landbird senior biologist at the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. Christopher J. Whelan is visiting research associate professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago and research affiliate at the Field Museum, Chicago. Besides editing this book, each has contributed one or more papers to the collection. The question this book asks is a somewhat controversial one: “how do birds add value to human economies and how can we measure this from the perspective of ecosystem services?” (p. ix) It requires looking at birds from an anthropocentric perspective: how do birds benefit us? This view is controversial because some scientists and natural historians believe it “prioritizes the instrumental value to the human being.” (p. 29)

A root critique of the monetary valuation of birds rests on the alleged dependence of intrinsic and instrumental value. For example, Weidensaul (p. 40) stated that valuation of services provided by birds “inevitably cheapens the very thing we’re trying to protect.” (“Why Birds Matter Economically” by Johnson et al. p. 25–48)

Certainly, using economic language to discuss birds can seem jarring to anyone who deeply enjoys nature. There are also serious ethical issues about how to assign value. In such schemes it is appropriate to ask questions such as, will charismatic or tastier birds be considered worth more than other less attractive birds? The authors of these papers are looking at a bird’s worth more in an ecological sense, but as one author notes:

To advance the conservation of birds, should we appeal to people's hearts, minds or wallets? All three. Our view is that the recognition that birds matter economically is a powerful tool for conservation and for improving human life. But it is just a tool—one that should be used not as a single decision-making criteria, but alongside recognition of the non-economic value dimensions of nature. (p. 41)

But earlier in that same paper, the authors offer this analogy:

Consider your plumber: recognizing the undeniably useful and valuable service a plumber provides in no way cheapens his or her intrinsic value as a human. Indeed, intrinsic human value and rights remain inviolate regardless of professional skill, as a plumber or otherwise. Meanwhile, failing to value a good plumber's services is foolish. Those of us who have a deep and abiding value for humans consider it ludicrous and immoral to base someone's intrinsic value conditionally on a practical one; those of us who make careful economic decisions consider it imprudent to ignore instrumental value. And so it should be for birds. (p. 30 "Why Birds Matter Economically" by Johnson et al.)

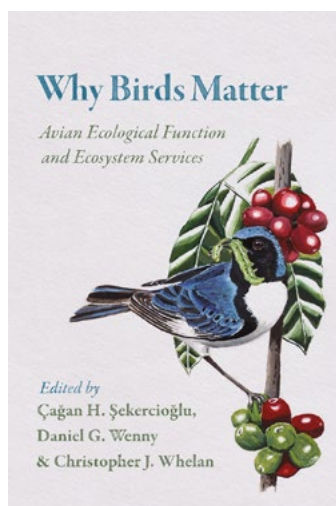


"Warblers feeding on young caterpillars of the gipsy moth" from Forbush (1905).

This analogy is worrisome because the concept of what constitutes "intrinsic human value" varies tremendously from country to country, culture to culture, and even within the United States. Just consider how different cultures value gays, women, minorities, different religions, or dissidents. Never mind birds. Furthermore, let's be honest, my relationship with a plumber is utilitarian, and rarely, if ever, do I consider his or her "value" if she or he does a poor job or charges too much. I just move on to another plumber. Looking at birds the way we look at plumbers appears to be exactly what Weidensaul alluded to in the quote above: we are cheapening the very thing we are trying to preserve. Fortunately, the rest of the papers in *Why Birds Matter* stick to hard science.

The idea of looking at the economic value of birds is an old one. During the last half of the 19th century and into the early years of the 20th century, the serious study of "economic ornithology" began when the United States Congress appropriated \$5000 to the United States Department of Agriculture to establish a section of Economic Ornithology under the direction of Dr. C. Hart Merriam. Studies were done, bulletins and annual reports published. *Useful Birds and Their Protection*, the 1905 classic by Edward Howe Forbush, is a good example of the economic ornithology literature

of the time. Many older birders in Massachusetts are familiar with this chatty magenta-bound tome, and it is found in many home birding libraries. Most of these studies done during this effort are considered flawed and short-sighted in their methodology and assessment. For example: a bird was declared “beneficial” if it was found to eat an insect pest occasionally. But that does not mean that that bird was actually an effective or important control of that pest most of the time. A roster of species was considered “detrimental,” and it was recommended that these species be eliminated or reduced in numbers. These species included House Sparrows, Sharp-shinned and Cooper’s hawks, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, and American Crows. The researchers obviously had narrow and flawed criteria for what constitutes a beneficial or detrimental species. Soon, the government-funded study of economic ornithology ended, and most of the research in that field stopped.



In 2001, the United Nations began the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, abbreviated MA. Here is a description of its mission from its website:

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) was called for by the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2000. Initiated in 2001, the objective of the MA was to assess the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being and the scientific basis for action needed to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of those systems and their contribution to human well-being. The MA has involved the work of more than 1,360 experts worldwide. Their findings, contained in five technical volumes and six synthesis reports, provide a state-of-the-art scientific appraisal of the condition and trends in the world’s ecosystems and the services they provide (such as clean water, food, forest products, flood control, and natural resources) and the options to restore, conserve or enhance the sustainable use of ecosystems.

A brief summation of their findings is also found on their website:

The bottom line of the MA findings is that human actions are depleting Earth’s natural capital, putting such strain on the environment that the ability of the planet’s ecosystems to sustain future generations can no longer be taken for granted. At the same time, the assessment shows that with appropriate actions it is possible to reverse the degradation of many ecosystem services over the next 50 years, but the changes in policy and practice required are substantial and not currently underway.

One of the ideas that came out of the MA was that “ecosystem services” was a way of defining the vital importance of the environment to government bodies in ways that everyone could understand. In *Why Birds Matter*, the authors list four classes of these

ecosystem services:

- Provisioning Services, such as food, water, timber and fiber
- Regulating Services that affect climate, floods, disease, waste, and water quality
- Cultural Services that provide recreational, aesthetic, and spiritual benefits
- Supporting Services such as soil formation, photosynthesis and nutrient cycling (p. 3)

Birding, of course, comes under class #3.

The papers in *Why Birds Matter* scientifically evaluate the important roles birds play in various ecosystem services. Papers include fascinating topics like “Pollination by Birds: A Functional Analysis” by Anderson et al. (p. 71–106), “Seed Dispersal by Fruit-Eating Birds” by Daniel G. Wenny et al. (p. 105–46), “Dispersal of Plants by Waterbirds” by Green et al. (p. 147–95), and “Ecosystem Services Provided by Avian Scavengers” by DeVault et al. (p.235–70). After reading these papers, you will begin to understand the critical part birds play in keeping the planet’s ecosystems functioning.

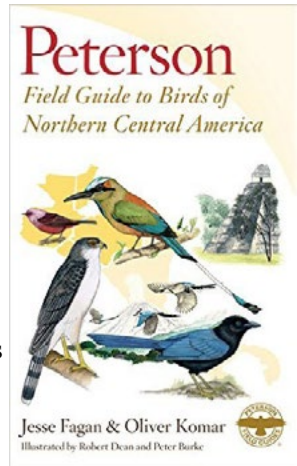
One of the most important and interesting papers is the last one: “Why Birds Matter: Bird Ecosystem Services that Promote Biodiversity and Support Human Well-being,” by Çağan H. Şekercioğlu et al. (p. 341–64). The authors address the idea of “bird ecosystem disservices.” You hear and read a lot about certain bird species like pigeons and starlings being pests, but how serious a problem are they? The authors write that there is often a big difference between the perceived and the real extent of damage caused by certain species. The super abundant Red-billed Quelea is considered a serious crop pest in Africa, but when one begins to evaluate the actual damage done by these birds across the continent, it is far less than perceived. In some cases, schemes to control certain “pest” bird species may be more harmful than the damage they cause. Birds certainly do cause problems like drilling holes in utility poles and striking aircraft, but the authors note that there is a role humans play too by creating unique habitats, like at airports, that are attractive to those species of birds. The authors end the paper by addressing the real issue of what it will cost to preserve avian diversity and therefore our well-being.

The financial costs of conservation appear great, perhaps even insurmountable. But even at the estimate of \$80 billion annually, those costs are small compared to the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services. As stated by McCathy et al. (2012): “More prosaically, the total required is less than 20% of annual global consumer spending on soft drinks.” Clearly, the capital to fund conservation exists. It is up to those of us who value birds, and the rest of nature, to urge governments and citizens of the world to find the will. (p. 357)

Why Birds Matter is an important introduction to the concept of “ecosystem services” and will give the birder a deeper appreciation of how birds keep the planet’s ecosystems functioning.

BRIEFLY NOTED BUT HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Massachusetts birders of a certain age (read: “old”) will remember Nick and Ollie Komar, avid young birders who quickly made an impression on the birding community for their enthusiasm as well as their careful field skills. Oliver Komar is now an ornithologist and professor of natural resources management at Zamorano University in Honduras. Together with Jesse Fagan, a professional guide for Field Guides Inc., he has written a dynamite new guide. The *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America* is a thick, but still “pocket sized” guide to the birds of Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Though many birders visit Belize, few visit the other countries covered in this guide. That’s too bad as there are at least 40 species endemic to this region as well a stellar array of other Central American species.



The book has introductory chapters on the topography and ecosystems of the area with special emphasis given to endemics. The illustrations by Robert Dean and Peter Burke are top notch and include a number of vignettes showing species in their favored habitats. Range maps are small but clearly drawn and up to date. Species accounts are to the point with solid information on how common a species is, where it is found, and the quality of its vocalizations. The book is, in other words, a classic field guide. Congratulations to everyone involved. It is hoped that the production of this guide will encourage more birders to sample the avian pleasures of this fascinating region.

If you would like to listen to my interviews with the authors, they are podcast on the WICN (90.5 FM) website under “Inquiry”: www.wicn.org

- My interview with Daniel G. Wenny and Christopher J. Whelan: <<http://www.wicn.org/podcasts/audio/daniel-g-wenny-and-christopher-whelan-why-birds-matter>>
- My interview with Oliver Komar: <<http://www.wicn.org/podcasts/audio/oliver-komar-peterson-field-guide-birds-northern-central-america>> 🐦

Literature Cited

Fagan, Jesse and Oliver Komar. 2016. *Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Northern Central America*. Boston, Massachusetts, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
Forbush, Edward Howe. 1905. *Useful Birds and Their Protection*. Boston, Massachusetts, Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture.

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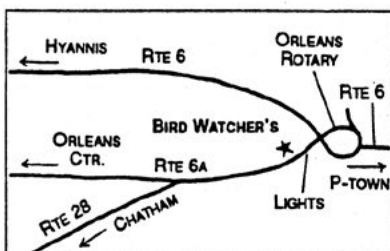
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BIRD SIGHTINGS

September-October 2016

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

The continuing drought was the major weather highlight. Rainfall has been below normal since January and many communities have established mandatory water restrictions. Hurricane Hermine arrived in Massachusetts on Labor Day with heavy winds and strong seas. Sustained winds reached 39 mph on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket and gusted to 59 mph at Gay Head. The storm was about 120 miles south of Nantucket and brought heavy rain on Cape Cod, but little away from the coast. The high temperature in September was 93° in Boston on September 9; the low was 48° on September 26. Precipitation in Boston was 1.38 inches, 2.06 inches below normal.

The temperature averaged 55° in Boston in October, close to normal. The high for the month was 81° on October 24 and the low was 34° on October 27. Rainfall was 5.46 inches, 1.52 inches above normal, the first month since January with above-normal precipitation.

R. Stymeist

WATERFOWL THROUGH ALCIDS

Greater White-fronted Goose and **Cackling Goose** are now regular if uncommon, although the latter is by far more regularly seen in the western part of the state. Given its similarity to Canada Goose, it is possible that western Massachusetts birders are just more attuned to this tricky species. A **Tufted Duck** was discovered in Groveland on October 23; it is most likely the same individual that has wandered around Essex County ponds over the past two years. Sea ducks were well reported from western Massachusetts ponds, but oddly not from the eastern part of the state.

Pacific Loons were reported from Plymouth and Provincetown. As usual, the Brookline Bird Club pelagic trip south of Cape Cod was productive, featuring three **White-faced Storm-Petrels**. Seawatching on outer Cape Cod was particularly exciting this period. Exceptional numbers of shearwaters were reported, particularly Cory's and Manx, with high numbers possibly setting state records. The most exciting sighting was a **Yellow-nosed Albatross** that was initially seen on October 10 and again by its lucky observer on October 14. A **Brown Booby** was reported off Provincetown on October 5.

An **American White Pelican** was photographed at the Oxbow in Northampton on September 15, one of only a handful of western Massachusetts records for this species. Despite searches by birders it was not relocated there, but was rediscovered three days later about 15 miles south in Longmeadow, where it stayed for six days to the delight of many birders.

Normally a count of 19 Great Egrets at the Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge would have been an impressive inland total, but numbers much farther inland at the Longmeadow Flats on the Connecticut River peaked at 39 individuals. Cattle Egrets are relatively regular in Essex County, but sightings in Sharon and Cambridge were unusual.

Although **Mississippi Kite** is now annual in spring migration, it is rare in fall, so a sighting at the Shatterack Mountain hawkwatch on September 21 was exciting. A **Swainson's Hawk** on September 20 at Mount Wachusett was also an impressive find.

A **Yellow Rail** was discovered at Fort Hill in Eastham on October 29. This species is rarely spotted in Massachusetts due to its cryptic nature. **Sandhill Cranes** were well reported throughout the state.

While the drought was bad for crops and lawns, it created good conditions for shorebirding in many inland locations. Of particular note was a Marbled Godwit that made a brief visit to Horn Pond in Woburn, an exceptionally rare inland visitor. The **American Avocet** originally discovered at Plum Island in July continued through September 24. A **Ruff** was discovered in Newburyport Harbor on September 2 and stayed for three days. Ruff is uncommon at any time of year but particularly so in the fall.

Seawatchers at Race Point in Provincetown reported a wide variety of gull species, highlighted by two sightings of **Sabine's Gull**. A single Sabine's was also spotted at Stellwagen Bank on September 17. The Laughing Gull that was initially spotted at Wachusett Reservoir on August 17 lingered through September 5. This species rarely wanders away from the coast.

M. Rines

Greater White-fronted Goose				10/18	Sharon	4	L. Waters
10/10-20	Turners Falls	2	E. Huston	10/24	Quabbin Pk	1	L. Therrien
10/24	Holden	1	M. Lynch#	Northern Pintail			
10/30	N. Adams	1	C. Johnson	10/thr	P.I.	120 max	v.o.
10/31	Acton	1	C. Leuchtenberg	10/11	E. Boston (B.I.)	3	DCR (S. Riley)
Snow Goose				10/18	Sharon	8	L. Waters
10/11	Richmond	7	G. Ward	10/20	GMNWR	3	A. Bragg#
10/19	Sharon	1	L. Waters	10/29	P'town (R.P.)	8	B. Nikula
10/20	Topsfield	1	S. Santino	Green-winged Teal			
10/21	Turners Falls	10	J. Coleman	9/17	Rutland	46	M. Lynch#
Brant				10/13	Haverhill	24	S. Mirick
9/24	Boston H.	10	G. d'Entremont#	10/20	Longmeadow	60	M. Moore
10/29	Fairhaven	235	M. Lynch#	10/20	P.I.	147	D. Williams
10/29	Eastham (F.H.)	125	G. d'Entremont#	10/30	Lexington	70	J. Forbes
Cackling Goose				Ring-necked Duck			
10/28	Turners Falls	1	G. Watkevich	thr	Waltham	81 max	J. Forbes
10/29	Northampton	2	K. Yakola	10/13	Haverhill	225	S. Mirick
10/29	Williamstown	1	C. Johnson	10/26	Cambr. (F.P.)	143	J. Miller
Mute Swan				10/29	Pittsfield	1100	S. Kellogg
10/8	Acoaxet	206	M. Lynch#	Tufted Duck			
10/26	Nantucket	82	T. Pastuszak	10/23-31	Groveland	1 m	v.o.
Wood Duck				Greater Scaup			
9/5	Paxton	62	R. Jenkins	9/24	Randolph	5	G. d'Entremont#
9/25	Ware R. IBA	51	M. Lynch#	10/22	Wachusett Res.	27	M. Lynch#
10/18	Sharon	50	L. Waters	10/23	Nantucket	325	J. Trimble#
10/20	GMNWR	107	A. Bragg#	10/23	Quabbin Pk	3	L. Therrien
10/28	Brookline	28	P. Peterson	10/29	Fairhaven	16	M. Lynch#
Gadwall				Lesser Scaup			
thr	P.I.	6 max	v.o.	10/1	Pittsfield	2	J. Pierce
9/24	Westport	2	G. Gove#	10/9	N. Adams	2	C. Johnson
10/16	Longmeadow	3	M. Moore	10/19	Quabbin Pk	2	L. Therrien
10/23	Waltham	3	J. Forbes	10/22	Wachusett Res.	2	M. Lynch#
10/23	Cheshire	3	G. Hurley	King Eider			
Eurasian Wigeon				10/31	P'town (R.P.)	1	L. Waters#
9/3	P.I.	1 ph	D. Prima	Common Eider			
10/14-27	Nantucket	1	R. Ouren	9/18	Rockport (H.P.)	26	J. Berry
American Wigeon				10/8	Westport	29	M. Lynch#
thr	Waltham	40 max	J. Forbes	10/22	Stellwagen	53	J. Berry#
10/8	Acoaxet	12	M. Lynch#	10/29	Eastham (CGB)	600	G. d'Entremont#
10/22	P.I.	60	N. Landry	Harlequin Duck			
Blue-winged Teal				10/7	P'town (R.P.)	2	J. Junda#
9/2	Ludlow	2	S. Motyl	10/30	Rockport	53	MAS (D. Weaver)
9/3	Waltham	12	J. Forbes	Surf Scoter			
10/2	DWWS	3	G. d'Entremont#	10/9	Pittsfield (Pont.)	5	J. Pierce
10/26	Nantucket	5	R. Ouren	10/10, 23	Quabbin Pk	10, 10	L. Therrien
Northern Shoveler				10/10	Dennis	2500	P. Flood
9/3	Woburn (HP)	2	C. Kaynor	10/14	Wachusett Res.	18	B. Kamp
10/16	Arlington Res.	2	M. Rines	10/19	Ipswich (C.B.)	300	J. Berry

White-winged Scoter				10/8	Acoaxet	6	M. Lynch#
9/22	Boylston	2	B. Kamp	10/25	Norton	6	K. Ryan
9/24	Plymouth	43	M. Lynch#	10/28	Nantucket	6	R. Ouren
10/10	Quabbin Pk	9	L. Therrien	Horned Grebe			
10/17	Wachusett Res.	10	B. Kamp	9/29	Sharon	2	L. Waters
10/19	Ipswich (C.B.)	200	J. Berry	10/14	Wachusett Res.	2	B. Kamp
10/21	Turners Falls	2	J. Coleman	10/17	Quabbin Pk	9	L. Therrien
Black Scoter				10/23	Southwick	3	S. Kellogg
10/10, 23	Quabbin Pk	122, 1	L. Therrien	10/29	Fairhaven	42	M. Lynch#
10/10	Ludlow	12	L. Richardson	Red-necked Grebe			
10/10	Wachusett Res.	180	M. Lynch#	10/10	Quabbin Pk	7	L. Therrien
10/15	Eastham (F.E.)	2600	M. Iliff#	10/15	Eastham (F.E.)	4	M. Iliff#
10/23	P.I.	100	A. Gurka	10/20	Sharon	2	L. Waters
10/26	Lincoln	15	M. Rines	10/22	Wachusett Res.	2	M. Lynch#
Long-tailed Duck				10/29	Fairhaven	4	M. Lynch#
9/26	Mt. Wachusett	1	R. Chase#	Yellow-nosed Albatross			
10/10	Sharon	2	L. Waters	10/10, 14	Eastham (F.E.)	1	B. Nikula#
10/10, 31	Quabbin Pk	4, 29	L. Therrien	Northern Fulmar			
10/17	Wachusett Res.	5	B. Kamp	10/1	P'town (R.P.)	14	S. Arena
10/31	Otis	1	D. Holmes	10/10	Eastham (F.E.)	2	B. Nikula
Bufflehead				10/22	Stellwagen	5	J. Berry#
10/9	Woburn (HP)	1	B. Lee	Cory's Shearwater			
10/16	W. Newbury	2	K. Elwell	9/thr	P'town	950 max	B. Nikula
10/26	Cambr. (F.P.)	3	J. Miller	9/21	Stellwagen	250	v.o.
10/29	Fairhaven	26	M. Lynch#	10/thr	P'town	12000 max	B. Nikula
10/31	Winthrop	3	P. Peterson	10/10	Eastham (F.E.)	800	B. Nikula
Hooded Merganser				10/16	N. Truro	400	B. Nikula
9/4	Rutland	17	M. Lynch#	10/22	Stellwagen	1200	J. Berry#
10/20	Paxton	11	M. Lynch#	Great Shearwater			
10/30	S. Quabbin	12	M. Lynch#	9/thr	P'town	2000 max	B. Nikula
Common Merganser				10/14	P'town (R.P.)	2800	S. Arena
9/3	Sandisfield	8	M. Lynch#	10/22	Stellwagen	400	J. Berry#
9/12	P.I.	15	R. Heil	Sooty Shearwater			
9/18	Hanover	4	L. Schibley	9/thr	P'town	750 max	B. Nikula
9/26	W. Newbury	11	D. Prima	9/13, 10/8	E. of Chatham	225, 175	B. Nikula#
10/16	Lincoln	1	J. Forbes	9/21	Stellwagen	300	v.o.
Red-breasted Merganser				10/29	P'town (R.P.)	30	B. Nikula
10/5	P.I.	10	T. Wetmore	Manx Shearwater			
10/19	Quabbin Pk	3	L. Therrien	9/13, 10/8	E. of Chatham	60, 380	B. Nikula#
10/29	Southwick	1	S. Kellogg	9/21	Stellwagen	500	v.o.
10/29	Fairhaven	82	M. Lynch#	9/25	P'town (R.P.)	1034	S. Arena
10/29	Pittsfield (Pont.)	2	S. Kellogg	10/29	P'town (R.P.)	175	B. Nikula
Ruddy Duck				Audubon's Shearwater			
9/24	Halifax	1	V. Zollo	9/24	S. of Nantucket	3	BBC Pelagic
9/27	Waltham	3	J. Forbes	White-faced Storm-Petrel			
10/19	W. Newbury	200	MAS (D. Moon)	9/24	S. of Nantucket	4	BBC Pelagic
10/23	Cheshire	24	G. Hurley	Leach's Storm-Petrel			
10/23	Groveland	21	M. Watson	10/1	Barnstable (S.N.)	10	P. Crosson#
10/26	Cambr. (F.P.)	18	J. Miller	10/2	P'town (R.P.)	7	P. Flood#
Ring-necked Pheasant				10/4	Wayland	1 ph	J. Hines#
9/8	Woburn (HP)	1	M. Rines	10/10	Dennis (Corp. B.)	10	P. Flood
9/25	Cumb. Farm	2	K. Rawdon#	10/10	Eastham (F.E.)	2	B. Nikula
10/24	Medfield	1	W. Webb	Brown Booby			
Ruffed Grouse				10/5	P'town (R.P.)	1	J. Pratt
9/25	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#	Northern Gannet			
Red-throated Loon				thr	P.I.	200 max	v.o.
10/9	Quabbin Pk	1	L. Therrien	10/10	Eastham (F.E.)	875	B. Nikula
10/14	Wachusett Res.	1	B. Kamp	10/16	N. Truro	700	B. Nikula
10/16	P.I.	5	T. Wetmore	10/thr	P'town	7000 max	B. Nikula
10/17	Winthrop B.	7	S. Zende#	10/30	Rockport	1000	D. Peterson
10/29	Fairhaven	6	M. Lynch#	Double-crested Cormorant			
Pacific Loon				9/8	Chatham	2200	J. Trimble#
10/7, 16	P'town (R.P.)	1, 1	Thompson, Flood	9/24	Plymouth	520	M. Lynch#
10/29	Plymouth	1	L. Schibley	10/8	Westport	238	M. Lynch#
Common Loon				10/11	P.I.	800	T. Wetmore
9/5	Quabbin (G33)	8	B. Lafley	Great Cormorant			
9/19	Wachusett Res.	24	M. Lynch#	9/17	Boston H.	1	C. Dalton
9/25	Mt. Watatic	6	T. Pirro	9/18	Rockport (H.P.)	4	J. Berry
10/29	Fairhaven	17	M. Lynch#	10/29	Fairhaven	36	M. Lynch#
Pied-billed Grebe				American White Pelican			
9/22	W. Newbury	6	S. McGrath	9/15	Northampton	1	P. Steinman
9/24	Westport	5	G. Gove#	9/18-24	Longmeadow	1	S. Motyl + v.o.

American Bittern				9/3-25	Mt. Watatic	74	Hawkcount (TP)
9/4	GMNWR	1	J. Kovner#	9/10-30	Barre Falls	38	Hawkcount (DS)
9/27	Tyringham	1	M. Morales	9/12-31	Mt. Shatterack	27	T. Swochak
10/22	P.I.	1	N. Landry	10/23	DFWS	1	MAS (P. Sowizral)
10/29	Eastham (F.H.)	2	J. Trimble#	10/25	Taunton	1	K. Ryan
Least Bittern				Mississippi Kite			
9/4	GMNWR	4	J. Kovner#	9/21	Mt. Shatterack	1	T. Swochak
9/18	Belchertown	1	L. Therrien	Bald Eagle			
Great Blue Heron				9/2-29	Mt. Wachusett	127	Hawkcount (SO)
9/12	P.I.	25	R. Heil	9/3-25	Mt. Watatic	48	Hawkcount (TP)
10/29	Eastham (F.H.)	38	L. Waters#	9/11-29	Barre Falls	13	Hawkcount (DS)
Great Egret				9/12	Mt. Wachusett	16	Hawkcount (SO)
9/3	Barnstable (S.N.)	56	P. Crosson	9/16	Mt. Wachusett	16	Hawkcount (SO)
9/18	Saugus	60	S. Zende#	10/3-17	Mt. Wachusett	24	Hawkcount (RC)
9/22	GMNWR	19	A. Bragg#	10/4-31	Barre Falls	19	Hawkcount (DS)
9/22	Agawam	8	S. Kellogg	Northern Harrier			
9/30	Longmeadow	39	S. Kellogg	9/2-29	Mt. Wachusett	15	Hawkcount (SO)
10/7	P.I.	130	T. Wetmore	9/3-17	Mt. Watatic	6	Hawkcount (TP)
Snowy Egret				9/15	Mt. Wachusett	6	Hawkcount (SO)
9/5	W. Springfield	1	M. Moore	9/15	Eastham (F.H.)	4	D. Shapiro
9/7	Revere	20	P. Peterson	9/17	P.I.	6	P. + F. Vale#
9/12	P.I.	120	R. Heil	9/22-29	Barre Falls	7	Hawkcount (DS)
10/8	Eastham (F.H.)	9	SSBC (GdE)	10/13-31	Barre Falls	15	Hawkcount (DS)
10/10	E. Boston (B.I.)	3	S. Zende#	Sharp-shinned Hawk			
10/22	Nantucket	13	J. Trimble#	9/2-29	Mt. Wachusett	369	Hawkcount (SO)
Little Blue Heron				9/3-25	Mt. Watatic	129	Hawkcount (TP)
9/1-9	Woburn (HP)	1	v.o.	9/10-30	Barre Falls	134	Hawkcount (DS)
9/5	W. Springfield	1	M. Moore	9/12-31	Mt. Shatterack	108	T. Swochak
9/13	Essex	1	D. Brown	10/4-17	Mt. Wachusett	65	Hawkcount (RC)
9/23	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore	10/4-26	Barre Falls	122	Hawkcount (DS)
10/18	Gr Barrington	1	G. Ward	10/10-30	Malden (PR)	82	Hawkcount (CJ)
Tricolored Heron				Cooper's Hawk			
9/9	W. Harwich	1	G. Gove#	9/2-29	Mt. Wachusett	75	Hawkcount (SO)
Cattle Egret				9/4-25	Mt. Watatic	19	Hawkcount (TP)
10/19	Sharon	1	L. Waters	9/13-30	Barre Falls	31	Hawkcount (DS)
10/26	Cambr. (Danehy)	1 ph	BBC (K. Hartel)	10/3-17	Mt. Wachusett	25	Hawkcount (RC)
Green Heron				10/3-31	Barre Falls	27	Hawkcount (DS)
9/2	Newbury	5	P. + F. Vale	10/10-26	Malden (PR)	30	Hawkcount (CJ)
9/15	Hyannis	5	S. Matheny	Northern Goshawk			
9/20	Grafton	4	S. LaBree	9/14	Ware R. IBA	2 ad	M. Lynch#
9/22	Woburn (HP)	2	D. Fruguglietti	10/5	Lexington	1	M. Rines
10/15	Arlington Res.	1	J. Forbes	10/8	Littleton	1	D. Neild
Black-crowned Night-Heron				10/14	Templeton	1	T. Pirro
9/2	W. Springfield	1	M. Moore	10/15	Rowley	1	S. Sullivan#
9/3	P.I.	13	J. Keeley#	10/23	Quabbin Pk	1	L. Therrien
9/4	Eastham	100	D. Clapp#	Red-shouldered Hawk			
9/14	Worcester	1	J. Lawson	9/2-22	Mt. Wachusett	8	Hawkcount (SO)
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron				9/15	Mt. Wachusett	3	Hawkcount (SO)
9/2	Newbypt H.	2	P. + F. Vale	10/3-05	Mt. Wachusett	3	Hawkcount (RC)
9/7	WBWS	4	S. Surner	10/16	Huntington	3	M. Lynch#
9/10	P.I.	6	N. Landry	10/20-31	Barre Falls	8	Hawkcount (DS)
9/12	S. Dartmouth	5	A. Morgan	Broad-winged Hawk			
9/17	Ipwich	11	N. Dubrow	9/1-29	Mt. Wachusett	6935	Hawkcount (SO)
9/24	Eastham	26	D. Clapp#	9/3-25	Mt. Watatic	3040	Hawkcount (TP)
Glossy Ibis				9/10-27	Barre Falls	1122	Hawkcount (DS)
9/1-15	GMNWR	1	A. Bragg	9/12-31	Mt. Shatterack	1755	T. Swochak
9/3	Chatham	3	S. Finnegan#	9/14	Mt. Shatterack	670	T. Swochak
10/1	Quincy	1	V. Zollo	9/15	Mt. Watatic	1699	Hawkcount (BR)
10/8	Eastham (F.H.)	1	M. Keleher#	9/15	Mt. Wachusett	1581	Hawkcount (SO)
Black Vulture				9/21	Mt. Wachusett	870	Hawkcount (RC)
9/17	Lexington	2	R. Doherty	9/21	Mt. Shatterack	596	T. Swochak
10/3	Worcester	1 dead	B. Kamp	9/24	Mt. Wachusett	2281	Hawkcount (RC)
10/11	Mt. Wachusett	3	Hawkcount (RC)	Swainson's Hawk			
Turkey Vulture				9/20	Mt. Wachusett	1	Hawkcount (RC)
9/25	P.I.	45	M. Brengle#	Rough-legged Hawk			
10/3-26	Barre Falls	281	Hawkcount (DS)	10/15	Lee	1	J. Morris-Siegal
10/11	Mt. Wachusett	134	Hawkcount (RC)	Golden Eagle			
10/15	Mt. Shatterack	68	T. Swochak	10/7	Worthington	1	E. Lewis
10/15	Mt. Watatic	151	Hawkcount (TP)	10/15	Mt. Shatterack	1	T. Swochak
10/15	Barre Falls	76	Hawkcount (DS)	Yellow Rail			
Osprey				10/29-31	Eastham (F.H.)	1	C. Floyd#
9/1-29	Mt. Wachusett	152	Hawkcount (SO)				

Clapper Rail				Western Willet			
9/25, 10/13	Fairhaven	2, 2	C. Longworth	9/3	Eastham	17	J. Trimble#
10/18	Orleans	1	P. Crosson#	Lesser Yellowlegs			
Sora				thr	Lincoln	17 max	J. Forbes
10/5	Worc. (BMB)	1	B. Robo	thr	P.I.	53 max	v.o.
10/7	Fairhaven	1	N. Sylvia	9/25	Quabbin	11	T. Gagnon
Common Gallinule				Upland Sandpiper			
10/8-22	Fairhaven	1	D. MacKinnon	10/12	Marshfield	1	D. Peacock
American Coot				Whimbrel			
9/17	Plymouth	1	D. Peacock	9/2	Edgartown	3	P. Gilmore
9/18, 10/23	Waltham	1, 4	J. Forbes	9/2-24	P.I.	17 max	v.o.
9/22, 10/31	Woburn (HP)	1, 13	v.o.	9/2	Wellfleet	15	M. Faherty
10/23	Groveland	20	C. Lapite	9/7	Nahant	1	D. Wilkinson
Sandhill Crane				9/16	Scituate	1	P. Peterson
thr	Burrage Pd WMA1-3		v.o.	Hudsonian Godwit			
5/9, 10/17	Worthington	4, 1	S. Lewis	9/1-10/16	P.I.	1-3	v.o.
9/8	Hadley	1	B. Thompson	9/1	Scituate	1	K. Rawdon
9/25	Cumb. Farms	1	B. Harris#	9/2	Wellfleet	2	M. Faherty
9/29	W. Bridgewater	1	B. Loughlin	9/30	Duxbury B.	1	R. Bowes
10/3	Tolland	3	D. Holmes	10/2	Nantucket	11	S. Kardell#
10/21-23	Newbury	1	v.o.	Marbled Godwit			
Black-bellied Plover				9/1, 9/14	Ipswich (C.B.)	3, 2	Lehman, Murray
thr	P.I.	150 max	v.o.	9/1	Scituate	1	K. Rawdon#
thr	Winthrop	110 max	v.o.	9/2	Chatham (S.B.)	5	K. Yakola
9/24	Quabbin (G35)	7	B. Kamp	9/8	Woburn (HP)	1	M. Rines
10/2	Chatham (S.B.)	1100	B. Harrington	9/11	Winthrop B.	2	S. Zende#
10/22	N. Quabbin	3	B. Laflay	9/19-10/11	Gloucester	2-3	v.o.
American Golden-Plover				9/23	Nantucket	1	T. Pastuszak
thr	Reports of indiv. from 15 locations			9/24	Westport	1	G. Gove#
9/1-10/16	P.I.	5 max	v.o.	Ruddy Turnstone			
9/2	Wellfleet	2	M. Faherty	9/6	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore
9/18, 10/19	Winthrop B.	2, 3	S. Zende#	9/16	Scituate	3	P. Peterson
9/25	Quabbin	3	T. Gagnon	9/18	Rockport (H.P.)	2	J. Berry
10/2	Chatham (S.B.)	2	B. Harrington	9/20, 10/31	Winthrop	6, 1	P. Peterson
10/12	Nantucket	4	K. Blackshaw#	Red Knot			
Semipalmated Plover				9/thr	P.I.	28 max	v.o.
thr	Woburn (HP)	22 max	v.o.	9/3	Eastham	81	J. Trimble#
thr	P.I.	350 max	v.o.	9/7	Revere (POP)	3	P. Peterson
9/2	Chatham (S.B.)	450	K. Yakola	10/2	Chatham (S.B.)	315	B. Harrington
Piping Plover				Sanderling			
9/7	P.I.	3	D. Adrien	9/16	Winthrop	36	R. Stymeist
10/12	Plymouth B.	2	S. van der Veen	9/17	Rutland	1	M. Lynch#
10/19	Ipswich (C.B.)	2	J. Berry	10/2	Chatham (S.B.)	2000	B. Harrington
Killdeer				10/12	P.I.	150	H. Galbraith
9/10	Newbury	49	P. + F. Vale	10/17	Winthrop B.	150	S. Zende#
10/13	Haverhill	32	S. Mirick	Semipalmated Sandpiper			
10/16	Lincoln	31	J. Forbes	9/2	Chatham	4000	C. Goodrich
American Oystercatcher				9/2	Essex	212	D. Brown#
9/20	Winthrop	5	P. Peterson	9/4	Woburn (HP)	115	J. Forbes
10/10	Fairhaven	3	C. Longworth	9/9	Lincoln	54	J. Forbes
10/13	Dorchester	2	J. Benson	9/11	Milton	25	P. Peterson
American Avocet				9/19	P.I.	550	T. Wetmore
9/1-24	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore	Western Sandpiper			
Spotted Sandpiper				9/19	Scituate	1	K. Rawdon
9/17	Rutland	4	M. Lynch#	10/4	P.I.	2	T. Wetmore
10/14	Wachusett Res.	2	B. Kamp	10/5	Quabbin (G43)	1	B. Kamp
10/30	Woburn (HP)	1	K. Sweadner#	Least Sandpiper			
Solitary Sandpiper				9/2	Woburn (HP)	45	R. Stymeist
9/4	Lexington	4	J. Forbes	9/8, 10/15	Lexington	75, 4	J. Forbes
9/15	Falmouth	4	G. Hirth	9/12	P.I.	35	R. Heil
10/17	Quabbin Pk	1	L. Therrien	9/15	Brookfield	13	M. Lynch#
10/26	Nantucket	1	R. Ouren	10/16	Randolph	5	V. Zollo
Greater Yellowlegs				10/18	Sharon	2	L. Waters
thr	P.I.	150 max	v.o.	White-rumped Sandpiper			
thr	Lincoln	30 max	J. Forbes	9/2	Essex	12	D. Brown#
9/1	Chatham	156	P. Crosson	9/3	E. Boston (B.I.)	6	DCR (S. Riley)
9/24	Quabbin (G35)	15	B. Kamp	9/9, 10/2	P.I.	85, 15	T. Wetmore
Willet				9/10	Lexington	2	J. Forbes
9/4	Essex	9	D. Brown#	9/11	Essex	5	D. Brown
9/5	Edgartown	2	S. Whiting	Baird's Sandpiper			
9/24	P.I.	1	M. Brengle	9/1-10/12	P.I.	1-2	v.o.

Baird's Sandpiper (continued)				10/26-28	Westboro	1	T. Spahr + v.o.
9/2	Barnstable (S.N.)	1	M. Eckerson	10/29	Pittsfield (Pont.)	1	M. Morales
9/3	P'town (R.P.)	1	P. Flood	10/29	Northampton	1	K. Yakola
9/4	Essex	2	D. Brown#	10/29	N. Truro	200	B. Nikula
9/11	Brookfield	1	M. Lynch#	10/29	Quabbin Pk	2	L. Therrien
9/20	Hull	1	K. Rawdon	Black-headed Gull			
9/26	S. Monomoy	1	B. Harrington	9/1-17	Lynn	1	v.o.
10/12	P'town	1	J. Rieger	9/17	Stellwagen	1	S. Arena#
10/17	Ipswich (C.B.)	1	N. Dubrow	9/24, 10/29	P'town (R.P.)	1, 1	B. Nikula
Pectoral Sandpiper				Little Gull			
10/2	Nantucket	100	S. Kardell#	9/24-26	Newbypt H.	2	imm C. Lapite + v.o.
10/2	Chatham (S.B.)	45	B. Harrington	10/27-28	Nahant	1	imm L. Pivacek + v.o.
10/4	P.I.	34	T. Wetmore	10/29	P'town (R.P.)	1	B. Nikula
10/15	Lexington	5	J. Forbes	Laughing Gull			
10/15	Washington	3	J. Pierce	9/1-5	Wachusett Res.	1	v.o.
10/23	Lincoln	6	J. Forbes	9/13	E. of Chatham	450	B. Nikula#
Dunlin				9/18, 10/17	Winthrop B.	60, 51	S. Zende#
10/2	Chatham (S.B.)	1800	B. Harrington	9/30	P'town	900	B. Nikula
10/20	P.I.	400	T. Wetmore	10/16	Chatham (MI)	1200	B. Nikula
10/20	Winthrop B.	120	S. Zende#	Iceland Gull			
10/22	N. Quabbin	3	B. Lafley	10/28	Turners Falls	1	J. Coleman
Stilt Sandpiper				10/29	P'town (R.P.)	1	B. Nikula
9/1-10/3	P.I.	4 max	v.o.	Lesser Black-backed Gull			
9/1-3	Woburn (HP)	1	v.o.	9/3	Eastham	5	J. Trimble#
9/3-8	N. Truro	1	B. Nikula#	9/5	Edgartown	21	S. Whiting
9/7	Lincoln	1	J. Forbes	9/13	E. of Chatham	6	B. Nikula#
10/20	Randolph	1	E. Lipton	9/23	Randolph	2	E. Lipton
10/31	Winthrop	1	P. Peterson	Least Tern			
Buff-breasted Sandpiper				9/18	P.I.	3	J. Keeley#
9/1	Wachusett Res.	1	B. Robo	Caspian Tern			
9/1-21	P.I.	4 max	v.o.	9/thr	Reports of 1-2 indiv. from 15 locations		
9/2	Edgartown	1	P. Gilmore	9/10	P.I.	4	S. Arena
9/2-17	Nahant B.	1	v.o.	9/13	Boston	3	G. Denton
9/3	Eastham	1	J. Trimble#	9/13	Dighton	4	J. Eckerson
9/17	Rutland	1	M. Lynch#	9/23	Randolph	5	E. Lipton
Ruff				9/25	P'town (R.P.)	3	S. Arena
9/2-5	Newbypt H.	1	J. Trimble + v.o.	Black Tern			
Short-billed Dowitcher				9/2	P'town (R.P.)	46	S. Arena
9/2	Newbypt	110	J. Trimble#	Roseate Tern			
9/thr	P.I.	60 max	v.o.	9/2	Chatham (S.B.)	350	K. Yakola
Long-billed Dowitcher				9/24	P'town (R.P.)	20	B. Nikula
10/23	Lincoln	1	J. Forbes	Common Tern			
10/23	P.I.	1	A. Gurka	9/2, 10	Wachusett Res.	2, 1	K. Bourinot
10/29	Nantucket	4	S. Kardell	9/5, 10/30	P'town	11000, 3000	B. Nikula
Wilson's Snipe				9/16	P.I.	12	S. Williams
10/2	Saugus	3	S. Zende#	9/21	Stellwagen	1500	v.o.
10/29	Nantucket	7	S. Kardell	9/24	Plymouth	5	M. Lynch#
American Woodcock				10/9	Pittsfield (Pont.)	11	J. Pierce
10/4	W. Roxbury (MP)	4	J. Battenfeld	Forster's Tern			
Wilson's Phalarope				9/3	Eastham	103	J. Trimble#
9/1-24	P.I.	1	v.o.	9/20	P.I.	5	D. Williams
Red-necked Phalarope				9/24	Plymouth	8	M. Lynch#
9/1	Wachusett Res.	2	K. Bourinot	10/3	Dennis	320	P. Flood
9/3	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. McMahon	10/15	P'town (R.P.)	70	B. Nikula
9/4-10/5	P'town	12 max	B. Nikula	Black Skimmer			
9/4	Holden	1	M. Lynch#	9/11	Edgartown	4	S. Whiting
9/21	Stellwagen	9	v.o.	9/20	Plymouth	2	L. Schibley
9/24	S. of Nantucket	150	BBC Pelagic	9/22	P.I.	2	S. Sullivan
Red Phalarope				9/28	Fairhaven	2	C. Longworth
9/24	S. of Nantucket	7	BBC Pelagic	South Polar Skua			
10/29	Eastham (CGB)	1	G. d'Entremont#	9/24	S. of Nantucket	1	BBC Pelagic
10/30	P'town (R.P.)	1	S.Arena#	Pomarine Jaeger			
Black-legged Kittiwake				9/30	P'town	3	B. Nikula
9/30	P'town	21	B. Nikula	10/9	Nantucket	1	B. Harris#
10/22	Stellwagen	60	J. Berry#	10/10	Eastham (F.E.)	16	B. Nikula
10/31	Dorchester	6	J. Benson	10/22	Stellwagen	5	J. Berry#
Sabine's Gull				Parasitic Jaeger			
9/5, 10/30	P'town (R.P.)	1, 1	S. Arena#	thr	P'town	359 max	B. Nikula
10/22	Stellwagen	1	J. Berry#	9/21	Stellwagen	50	v.o.
Bonaparte's Gull				10/2	Orleans	15	B. Nikula
10/14	P.I.	200	S. Sullivan	10/10	Eastham (F.E.)	33	B. Nikula
10/22	Pittsfield (Onota)	1	G. Ward	10/16	N. Truro	20	B. Nikula

Long-tailed Jaeger			9/15	P'town (R.P.)	1	S. Arena
9/5 Barnstable (S.N.)	2	J. Trimble	9/30	Rockport (A.P.)	1	R. Heil
9/13 E. of Chatham	2	B. Nikula#	10/23	P.I.	2	A. Gurka
9/21 Stellwagen	4	v.o.	Black Guillemot			
9/24-10/30 P'town (R.P.)	1-3	B. Nikula	9/1-10/12	P.I.	1	v.o.
Dovekie			10/14	Rockport (H.P.)	1	H. Galbraith
10/4 P'town	1	B. Nikula	Large alcid species			
10/15 Eastham (F.E.)	2	M. Iliff#	9/4	P'town	1	B. Nikula
Razorbill						
9/5 Cohasset	1	V. Zollo				

CUCKOOS THROUGH FINCHES

This period features the peak movement of Northern Saw-whet Owls. The best conditions for observing this are during a dark night with cold temperatures and a light north wind. Halloween night was such a night. While trick-or-treaters were roaming neighborhoods, so were the owls; a total of 74 Saw-whets were caught and banded between sites in Lincoln and Northbridge. The Drumlin Farm site had a record season with a total of 371 Saw-whets, 300 of which were banded during October. The previous high was 296 in 2010 and 2012. There was a good flight of Common Nighthawks in early September, especially in Northampton with counts of 368 on September 1 and 269 on September 8; late reports included October reports from Wayland and Princeton. The last Whip-poor-will heard on Plum Island was on September 12, the same date as in 2015.

Hummingbirds that show up in October and beyond need special scrutiny for possible vagrants. This year there were two confirmed records of Rufous Hummingbirds. Another Rufous or Allen's hummingbird was photographed in Essex in late September, and an unidentified hummingbird was seen at Dunback Meadow in Lexington on October 14. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was carefully documented October 23 on Nantucket.

Two Red-headed Woodpeckers, both adults, were reported during this period from Bolton Flats and Belchertown. Some exceptional late records included an Olive-sided Flycatcher on September 25, an Acadian Flycatcher banded in Brewster on September 8, a Philadelphia Vireo in Westborough on October 30, a Swainson's Thrush on October 18, and a Yellow Warbler on October 31.

Sparrow highlights during this period included 14 Clay-colored Sparrows, down from 24 during the same period last year, eight Larks, four Grasshoppers, and 28 Nelson's, 12 of which were found in Newbury during a high tide. In Huntington, observers tallied 96 Savannah, 25 Lincoln's, and 136 Swamp sparrows on October 2. A **Harris's Sparrow** was found in the Westborough WMA on October 26 where it continued through the end of October. There are over 20 records of Harris's Sparrow in the state; the most recent was at a Wenham feeder from November 28, 2013, until March 16, 2014.

This season was a banner year for vagrants and less common birds. A **Gray Kingbird** took up a short residency at Ocean Avenue Beach in Hyannis to the delight of many birders. This was the fifth record for the state, the last being on September 8, 2006, at Aquinnah on the Vineyard. **Bell's Vireo** has become an annual vagrant since 2005; this year they were located at Fort Hill in Eastham and at Manomet. A total of 24 Philadelphia Vireos were reported. A **Cave Swallow** was carefully identified along Nahant Beach, the first September record for Massachusetts. A **Northern Wheatear** put in a brief appearance in Sandwich and a **Townsend's Solitaire** was photographed on Plum Island. A total of 32 warbler species were noted during the period, highlighted by a **Black-throated Gray** in Aquinnah, a Golden-winged in Amherst, and at least 44 Orange-crowned Warblers and 44 Connecticut Warblers. Manomet banded 293 Blackpolls during October.

R. Stymeist

Yellow-billed Cuckoo				Yellow-bellied Sapsucker			
10/6	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#	9/3	Ashby	2	J. Forbes
10/8	Sheffield		J. Alexander	9/3	Sandisfield	6	M. Lynch#
10/18	Charlestown	1	J. Layman	10/29	Nantucket	2	S. Kardell
10/19	P.I.	1	S. Selesky	Northern Flicker			
10/20	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	T. Bradford	9/26	P.I.	12	T. Wetmore
10/24	Eastham (F.H.)	2	S. Williams	10/2	Huntington	29	M. Lynch#
Black-billed Cuckoo				10/29	Eastham (F.H.)	17	J. Trimble#
10/5	WBWS	1 b	J. Junda#	Pileated Woodpecker			
10/20	Nantucket	1	R. Ouren	9/22	GMNWR	3	A. Bragg#
Eastern Screech-Owl				9/25	Ware R. IBA	5	M. Lynch#
9/11	Southwick	2	S. Svec	Olive-sided Flycatcher			
9/17	Plymouth (MSSF)	2	G. d'Entremont#	9/1-25	Reports of indiv. from 8 locations		
Great Horned Owl				Eastern Wood-Pewee			
9/7	Natick	2	P. Loranger	9/3	Sandisfield	11	M. Lynch#
9/29	GMNWR	2	A. Bragg#	9/5	Lowell	4	M. Baird
Barred Owl				9/30	Northboro	2	T. Spahr
9/3	Sandisfield	2	M. Lynch#	10/8	Eastham	1	SSBC (GdE)
10/8	Quabbin	4	B. Cassie	Yellow-bellied Flycatcher			
Northern Saw-whet Owl				9/4	P.I.	1 b	B. Flemer#
9/7	Williamstown	1	C. Johnson	9/14	New Salem	1	B. Laflay
10/thr	DFWS	300 b	K. Seymour	9/21	Otis	1	W. Rogers
10/thr	Northbridge	74 b	B. Milke	9/30	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#
10/31	Northbridge	32 b	B. Milke	Acadian Flycatcher			
10/31	DFWS	42 b	K. Seymour	9/8	Brewster	1 b	S. Finnegan#
Common Nighthawk				Least Flycatcher			
9/1, 8	Northampton	368, 269	T. Gagnon	9/10	Ware R. IBA	2	M. Lynch#
9/10, 10/6	Wayland	39, 1	B. Harris#	9/16	P.I.	1	S. Williams
10/15	Princeton	3	S. LaBree	9/20	Lexington	1	M. Rines
Eastern Whip-poor-will				9/26	Westboro	2	T. Spahr
9/3	Wachusett Res.	1	B. Robo	10/18	Sharon	1	L. Waters
9/12	P.I.	1	D. Adrien	Eastern Phoebe			
9/21	Truro	1	D. Shapiro	9/12	P.I.	17	R. Heil
Chimney Swift				9/14	Ware R. IBA	33	M. Lynch#
9/1	P.I.	3	T. Wetmore	9/15	HRWMA	12	D. + P. Knowlton
10/6	Wayland	4	B. Harris	9/24	Lexington (DM)	18	M. Rines#
Ruby-throated Hummingbird				9/24	E. Boston (B.I.)	12	DCR (S. Riley)
9/13	Belmont	2	R. Stymeist	9/25	Bolton Flats	13	K. Bourinot#
9/14	Norwell	2	C. Patterson	10/31	Worc. (BMB)	1	B. Robo
9/16	Rehoboth	2	K. Bartels	10/31	Winthrop	1	P. Peterson
9/21	Woburn (HP)	2	M. Rines	Great Crested Flycatcher			
10/23	Nantucket	1	J. Trimble#	9/14	Westboro	2	T. Spahr
Rufous Hummingbird				9/21	Waltham	1	J. Forbes
10/7-31	Westboro	1 b ph	S. Williams + v.o.	9/24	Newton	1	I. Reid
10/12-28	Andover	1 b ph	D. Cooper + v.o.	9/24	Jamaica Plain	1	T. Bradford
Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird				Eastern Kingbird			
9/29	Essex	1 ph	P. Brown	9/10	Tuckernuck	3	R. Veit
Hummingbird species				9/11	P.I.	1	J. Forbes
10/14	Lexington	1	J. Layman	9/17	Worc. (BMB)	1	B. Robo
American Kestrel				9/19	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
9/thr	Mt. Wachusett	91	Hawkcount (SO)	Gray Kingbird			
9/17	Granville	12	J. Weeks	10/23-31	Hyannis	1	C. Wrisley + v.o.
9/24	Mt. Watatic	16	Hawkcount (TP)	Northern Shrike			
9/24	Mt. Wachusett	28	Hawkcount (RC)	10/22	N. Truro	2	J. Offermann
10/4	Hadley	14	J. Oliverio	10/23	Windsor	1	J. Morris-Siegal
Merlin				White-eyed Vireo			
9/2-26	Mt. Wachusett	21	Hawkcount (SO)	9/17	Westboro	1	T. Spahr
9/12	P.I.	5	R. Heil	9/20	Newton	1	R. Doherty
9/15-27	Barre Falls	11	Hawkcount (DS)	9/29	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#
10/3-31	Barre Falls	10	Hawkcount (DS)	10/7	Nantucket	1	B. Harris#
10/5-11	Mt. Wachusett	10	Hawkcount (RC)	10/10	Wellfleet	1	J. Pratt
Peregrine Falcon				10/13	P.I.	1 b	B. Flemer#
9/11-24	Mt. Wachusett	29	Hawkcount (SO)	10/16	P'town	1	M. Keleher
10/4-11	Mt. Wachusett	4	Hawkcount (RC)	10/16	Roslindale	1	M. Kaufman
10/4-31	Barre Falls	5	Hawkcount (DS)	10/17	Lanesville	1	B. Harris#
Red-headed Woodpecker				Bell's Vireo			
9/25	Bolton Flats	1 ad	K. Bourinot#	10/12-31	Manomet	1 imm b	T. Lloyd-Evans#
10/15-31	Belchertown	1 ad	L. Therrien#	10/24-27	Eastham (F.H.)	1	S. Williams#
Red-bellied Woodpecker				Yellow-throated Vireo			
9/24	Braintree	12	G. d'Entremont#	9/3	Sandisfield	7	M. Lynch#
10/5	Ipswich	12	J. Berry	Blue-headed Vireo			
10/26	Quabog IBA	6	M. Lynch#	9/25	Ware R. IBA	14	M. Lynch#

Blue-headed Vireo (continued)				House Wren			
9/26	Sandwich	5	J. Glydon	9/3	Sandisfield	7	M. Lynch#
10/16	Woburn (HP)	4	M. Rines	9/13	Belmont	5	R. Stymeist
10/18	Medford	2	R. LaFontaine	9/18	Lexington	4	M. Rines
10/19	Cambr. (F.Pd)	2	M. Sabourin	10/2	Cumb. Farms	3	G. d'Entremont#
Warbling Vireo				10/30	Saugus	1	S. Jones
9/22	Westboro	2	N. Paulson	Winter Wren			
9/26	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	R. Stymeist	10/20	Paxton	2	M. Lynch#
10/6	Boston (Fens)	1	P. Peterson	10/27	Medford	2	R. LaFontaine
10/13	Marshfield	1	D. Peacock	10/30	Lexington (DM)	2	M. Rines#
Philadelphia Vireo				Sedge Wren			
thr	Reports of indiv. from 16 locations			9/16	Northampton	1	B. Bieda
9/12	Brewster	2	D. Clapp	10/29	Eastham (F.H.)	2	E. Lipton#
9/15	P.I.	3	S. Sullivan	Marsh Wren			
10/7	Nantucket	2	B. Harris#	9/15	Topsfield	3	J. Berry
10/27-30	Westboro	1	M. Garvey#	9/22	GMNWR	11	A. Bragg#
Red-eyed Vireo				10/12	Newbury	3	C. Floyd#
9/3	Ashby	4	J. Forbes	10/29	Eastham (F.H.)	8	J. Trimble#
9/10	Ware R. IBA	27	M. Lynch#	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher			
9/13	Belmont	5	R. Stymeist	9/13	Belmont	1	R. Stymeist
10/7	P.I.	3	E. Labato	9/21	P.I.	1	MAS (D. Moon)
10/26	Nantucket	4	J. Trimble#	9/29	GMNWR	1	A. Bragg#
Fish Crow				10/18	Orleans	2	P. Crosson#
9/24	Plymouth	4	M. Lynch#	10/19	Boston (Fens)	1	R. Schain#
10/11	Quincy	50	P. Peterson	Golden-crowned Kinglet			
Common Raven				10/11	P.I.	25	T. Wetmore
9/2	Mt. Wachusett	35	S. Olson	10/16	Brewster	16	S. Finnegan
9/12	Mt. Watatic	44	B. Rusnica	10/23	Nantucket	11	J. Trimble#
9/20	Barre Falls	22	D. Schilling#	10/24	Holden	8	M. Lynch#
9/29	Groton	5	S. Miller	10/31	Winthrop	8	P. Peterson
10/7-13	Barre Falls	17	D. Schilling	Ruby-crowned Kinglet			
Horned Lark				9/21	Lexington	1	M. Rines
10/2	Saugus	20	S. Zende#	10/2	Huntington	34	M. Lynch#
10/5	P.I.	45	D. Adrien	10/12	Ipswich	6	J. Berry#
10/19	Ipswich (C.B.)	2	J. Berry	10/15	Worc. (BMB)	7	J. Liller
Purple Martin				10/23	Nantucket	8	J. Trimble#
9/4	Mashpee	1	M. Keleher	10/31	P'town	10	L. Waters#
9/6	Northampton	1	T. Gagnon	Northern Wheatear			
Tree Swallow				9/13	Sandwich	1	P. Crosson#
9/25	P'town (R.P.)	5000	S. Arena	Eastern Bluebird			
9/26	Quincy	100	P. Peterson	9/25	Ware R. IBA	10	M. Lynch#
10/8	Westport	1100	M. Lynch#	9/30	Quabog IBA	23	M. Lynch#
10/16	Cumb. Farms	80	B. Cassie	10/14	Concord	11	R. Stymeist
10/18	Nantucket	20,000	L. Dunn	10/19	DFWS	30	MAS (P. Sowizral)
10/22	Southwick	15	S. Kellogg	Townsend's Solitaire			
Northern Rough-winged Swallow				10/18	P.I.	1 ph	R. Murphy
9/16	P.I.	2	S. Williams	Veery			
10/4	Wayland	60	J. Forbes#	9/4	Holden	1	M. Lynch#
Bank Swallow				9/16	P.I.	1	S. Williams
9/1	Wayland	3	J. Forbes	Gray-cheeked Thrush			
9/4	Saugus	1	S. Zende#	9/25	Marlboro	1	T. Spahr
9/19	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	M. Iliff	Swainson's Thrush			
9/21	P.I.	6	S. Sullivan	9/24	Boston H.	2	R. Stymeist#
Cliff Swallow				9/25	Ware R. IBA	2	M. Lynch#
9/1	GMNWR	1	C. Cook	10/3	Pittsfield	1	G. Hurley
10/10	Nantucket	1	B. Harris#	10/6	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#
Cave Swallow				10/11	DFWS	1	P. Sowizral#
9/6	Nahant B.	1	L. Pivacek	10/18	Northboro	1	S. Miller
Barn Swallow				Hermit Thrush			
9/7	Wayland	50	J. Forbes	10/6	Ware R. IBA	15	M. Lynch#
9/16	Westboro	5	J. Lawson	10/19	Worc. (BMB)	3	J. Liller
9/16	Ipswich (C.B.)	7	J. Berry	10/29	Medford	19	M. Rines#
9/18	Quabog IBA	40	M. Lynch#	10/30	Lexington (DM)	12	M. Rines#
10/4	Truro	1	J. Pratt	Gray Catbird			
Red-breasted Nuthatch				9/thr	P.I.	118 b	B. Flemer#
9/3	Ashby	8	J. Forbes	9/13	Burlington	25	M. Rines
9/3	Sandisfield	66	M. Lynch#	10/30	Westboro	1	G. d'Entremont
9/12	P.I.	15	R. Heil	10/30	Saugus	1	S. Zende#
9/27	Mt.A.	10	R. Stymeist	Brown Thrasher			
10/23	Nantucket	23	J. Trimble#	9/12	P.I.	11	R. Heil
Brown Creeper				9/13	Burlington	1	M. Rines
thr	P.I.	34 b	B. Flemer#	9/18	Rockport (H.P.)	1	J. Berry

Brown Thrasher (continued)				Connecticut Warbler			
9/26	Quincy	1	P. Peterson	9/1-10/12	Reports of indiv. from 25 locations		
American Pipit				9/15	P.I.	5	T. Wetmore
10/1	P'town (R.P.)	30	B. Nikula	9/18	Lexington	4	M. Rines
10/2	Deerfield	50	E. Huston	9/26	Westboro	5	T. Spahr
10/3	Southwick	50	S. Kellogg	9/27	Belchertown	2	L. Therrien
10/13	GMNWR	27	A. Bragg#	9/27	N. Reading	2	J. Keeley
10/15	Newbury	56	R. Heil	Mourning Warbler			
10/22	Hadley	160	S. Surner	9/3	Boston H.	1	D. Walters
10/24	Rutland	80	M. Lynch#	9/13	P.I.	1 b	B. Flemer#
10/29	Nantucket	24	S. Kardell	9/14	Westboro	1	T. Spahr
Cedar Waxwing				9/20	Groton	1	T. Murray
9/3	P.I.	52	J. Keeley#	9/23	Hadley	1	K. Yakola
9/13	Burlington	27	M. Rines	10/3	Brewster	1 b	S. Finnegan#
9/14	Ware R. IBA	37	M. Lynch#	Common Yellowthroat			
10/21	Norton	70	K. Ryan	9/24	Lexington (DM)	18	M. Rines#
Lapland Longspur				9/25	Bolton Flats	18	K. Bourinot#
9/30	Quincy	1	E. Lipton	10/2	Huntington	43	M. Lynch#
10/6	Wayland	1	B. Harris	10/4	Boston (Fens)	10	P. Peterson
10/21	P.I.	5	T. Wetmore	Hooded Warbler			
10/30	Acton	2	D. Swain	9/1	MNWS	1	J. Smith
Snow Bunting				9/17	Freetown	1	J. Eckerson
10/20	P.I.	24	D. Chickering	10/7	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#
10/24	GMNWR	1	J. Forbes	10/18	P.I.	1 b	B. Flemer#
10/29	Quabbin Pk	5	L. Therrien	American Redstart			
10/30	Quincy	1	P. Peterson	9/3	Ashby	4	J. Forbes
Ovenbird				9/3	Sandisfield	5	M. Lynch#
9/10	Ware R. IBA	4	M. Lynch#	9/12	Wellfleet	8	M. Keleher
9/24	Petersham	1	J. Reynolds	9/24	Braintree	5	G. d'Entremont#
10/7	P.I.	1 b	B. Flemer#	10/25	Medford	1	R. LaFontaine
10/22	N. Dighton	1	A. Eckerson	Cape May Warbler			
10/31	Boston (RKG)	1	J. Taylor#	9/3	N. Truro	3	J. Pratt
Worm-eating Warbler				9/6	Westboro	4	T. Spahr
9/18	MNWS	1	S. Williams	9/10	Tuckernuck	40	R. Veit
Northern Waterthrush				9/15	Westboro	2	T. Spahr
9/15	Woburn (HP)	1	M. Rines	9/18	Williamstown	7	H. Powell
9/20	Groton	1	T. Murray	Northern Parula			
9/22	P.I.	1 b	B. Flemer#	9/21	Waltham	4	J. Forbes
9/30	Quabog IBA	1	M. Lynch#	9/24	Lexington (DM)	3	M. Rines#
10/22	Boston (Fens)	1	P. Peterson	9/25	Ware R. IBA	9	M. Lynch#
Golden-winged Warbler				10/24	Aquinnah	3	B. Shriber
9/15	Amherst	1	K. Yakola	10/24	Holden	1	M. Lynch#
Blue-winged Warbler				Magnolia Warbler			
9/3	Sandisfield	1	M. Lynch#	9/10	Ware R. IBA	1	M. Lynch#
9/11	Boston (Fens)	1	C. Dalton	9/15	P.I.	2	S. Sullivan
Black-and-white Warbler				10/28	Manomet	1 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#
9/9	Lexington	2	C. Floyd	10/30	Boston (PG)	1	G. Fabbri
9/10	Ware R. IBA	9	M. Lynch#	Bay-breasted Warbler			
9/13	Belmont	2	R. Stymeist	9/27	Mt.A.	1	R. Stymeist
9/24	Braintree	2	G. d'Entremont#	10/16	Longmeadow	1	A. Robblee
10/5	Jamaica Plain	2	P. Peterson	Blackburnian Warbler			
10/30	Nantucket	1	S. Kardell	9/10	Ware R. IBA	2	M. Lynch#
Tennessee Warbler				9/28	Rosindale	1	M. Iliff
thr	Reports of indiv. from 13 locations						
Orange-crowned Warbler				Yellow Warbler			
9/21-10/31	Reports of indiv. from 26 locations						
10/7	Lexington	2	C. Cook	9/6	Westboro	13	T. Spahr
10/9	Mattapan (BNC)	2	P. Peterson	9/23	Worc. (BMB)	2	B. Robo
10/15	Newbury	3	R. Heil	10/31	Boston (Fens)	1	R. Schain
10/19	Boston (Fens)	5	R. Schain#	Chestnut-sided Warbler			
10/29	Eastham (F.H.)	2	J. Trimble#	9/3	Sandisfield	6	M. Lynch#
10/30	Gloucester (E.P.)	2	S. Hedman	10/2	Concord	1	T. Swain
10/30	Cambr. (Alewife)	2	R. Stymeist	10/2	Huntington	1	M. Lynch#
Nashville Warbler				Blackpoll Warbler			
10/3	Arlington Res.	4	M. Rines	9/12	P.I.	10	R. Heil
10/9	Mattapan (BNC)	4	P. Peterson	10/8	Arlington Res.	19	M. Rines#
10/11	Barnstable	3	P. Crosson	10/9	Mattapan (BNC)	20	P. Peterson
10/15	Middleton	2	J. Berry#	10/thr	Manomet	293 b	T. Lloyd-Evans#
10/16	Newton	2	J. Forbes	10/15	Newbury	28	R. Heil
10/19	Boston (Fens)	9	R. Schain#	10/19	Boston (Fens)	17	R. Schain#
10/31	Woburn (HP)	1	R. Jilek	10/23	Nantucket	41	J. Trimble#
				Black-throated Blue Warbler			
				9/10	Ware R. IBA	2	M. Lynch#

Black-throated Blue Warbler (continued)				10/16	Cumb. Farms	1	B. Cassie
10/22	Nantucket	2	G. Andrews	10/27	P.I.	1	D. Chickering
10/22	P.I.	2	E. Labato	Lark Sparrow			
10/26	Nantucket	2	J. Trimble#	9/3	E. Boston (B.I.)	1	DCR (S. Riley)
Palm Warbler				9/10-14	Lincoln	1	G. Denton + v.o.
9/18	Lexington	7	M. Rines	9/12	Medford	1	A. Trautmann
9/23	Concord	21	M. Rines	9/14	Cumb. Farms	1	X. Wei
9/25	Bolton Flats	11	K. Bourinot#	9/16-18	Concord	1	C. Winstanley + v.o.
10/2	Huntington	63	M. Lynch#	9/20	P.I.	1	D. Adrien#
10/14	Middleton	6	A. Bean	10/5	Cambr. (Danehy)	1	BBC (K. Hartel)
10/19	DFWS	8	MAS (P. Sowizral)	10/29	Aquinnah	1	S. Whiting
10/19	Worc. (BMB)	7	J. Liller	Savannah Sparrow			
Pine Warbler				10/2	Huntington	96	M. Lynch#
9/10	Ware R. IBA	39	M. Lynch#	10/7	Lexington	75	C. Cook
9/24	Jamaica Plain	5	P. Peterson	10/8	Middleton	62	J. Berry#
10/8	P'town	3	SSBC (GdE)	10/12	Concord	28	R. Stymeist
Yellow-rumped Warbler				10/15	Newbury	33	R. Heil
9/3	P.I.	1	J. Keeley#	10/18	W. Roxbury (MP)	70	P. Peterson
10/2	Huntington	58	M. Lynch#	10/30	Saugus	35	S. Zende#
10/6	GMNWR	36	A. Bragg#	Ipswich Sparrow			
10/15	Lexington (DM)	86	M. Rines#	10/8	Mattapoisett	1	L. Waters#
10/15	Mt. Watatic	50	T. Pirro	10/18	Orleans	1	P. Crosson#
10/27	Brewster	130	S. Finnegan	10/19	Ipswich (C.B.)	6	J. Berry
10/29	Fairhaven	62	M. Lynch#	Grasshopper Sparrow			
10/30	Quincy	55	P. Peterson	9/17	Hadley	1	A. Griffiths
Prairie Warbler				9/25	Cumb. Farms	1	B. Harris#
9/3	Sandisfield	2	M. Lynch#	9/26	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
10/7	P.I.	2	D. Prima	10/31	W. Roxbury (MP)	1	T. Bradford
10/14	Middleton	2	B. + B. Drummond	Nelson's Sparrow			
Black-throated Gray Warbler				9/7	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
10/8	Aquinnah	1 ph	B. Shriber	9/26	Tyringham	1	M. Morales
Black-throated Green Warbler				10/8	Plymouth	5	L. Waters#
9/10	Ware R. IBA	12	M. Lynch#	10/8	Wareham	2	L. Waters#
9/16	P.I.	4	S. Williams	10/10	GMNWR	1	D. Bates#
9/24	Lexington (DM)	4	M. Rines#	10/12	Newbury	12	C. Floyd#
9/27	Mt.A.	3	R. Stymeist	10/19	Fairhaven	3	C. Longworth
10/9	Mattapan (BNC)	4	P. Peterson	10/29	Eastham (F.H.)	3	J. Trimble#
10/18	Sharon	3	L. Waters	Saltmarsh Sparrow			
Canada Warbler				9/22	P.I.	4	S. Sullivan
9/2	P.I.	1 b	B. Flemer#	10/7	Dorchester	1	J. Benson#
10/2	Quincy	1	V. Zollo	10/12	Newbury	9	C. Floyd#
10/8	Northampton	1	J. Smith	10/17	Rowley	1	J. Berry
Wilson's Warbler				10/19	Fairhaven	6	C. Longworth
9/12	Boston (Fens)	2	P. Peterson	Seaside Sparrow			
10/9	Mattapan (BNC)	1	P. Peterson	10/3	Barnstable	3	J. Junda#
Yellow-breasted Chat				10/19	Orleans	2	J. Pratt
thr	Reports of indiv. from 7 locations			10/20	Fairhaven	1	J. Gahagan
10/29	Eastham (F.H.)	5	J. Trimble#	10/21	P.I.	1	T. Wetmore
Eastern Towhee				Fox Sparrow			
9/12	P.I.	39	R. Heil	10/13	GMNWR	1	A. Bragg#
9/18	Rockport (H.P.)	5	J. Berry	10/14	P.I.	1	S. Sullivan
9/25	Ware R. IBA	18	M. Lynch#	10/15	Newbury	1	R. Heil
10/29	Fairhaven	2	M. Lynch#	10/16	Huntington	1	M. Lynch#
10/29	Easton	1	K. Ryan	10/18	Groton	1	T. Murray
American Tree Sparrow				Lincoln's Sparrow			
10/27	GMNWR	2	K. Dia#	9/18, 10/13	Lexington	3, 3	M. Rines
10/29	P.I.	1	N. Landry	9/25	Bolton Flats	9	K. Bourinot#
10/31	Dorchester	1	J. Benson	9/29	Groton	9	S. Miller
Clay-colored Sparrow				10/2	Huntington	25	M. Lynch#
thr	Reports of indiv. from 14 locations			Swamp Sparrow			
Field Sparrow				9/25	Bolton Flats	46	K. Bourinot#
10/8	Eastham	10	SSBC (GdE)	9/29	Groton	20	S. Miller
10/12	P.I.	3	E. Labato	10/2	Huntington	136	M. Lynch#
10/26	Mattapan (BNC)	3	P. Peterson	10/6	GMNWR	22	A. Bragg#
Vesper Sparrow				10/7	Lexington	21	C. Cook
9/24	E. Boston (B.I.)	2	DCR (S. Riley)	10/15	Wellfleet	23	L. Waters#
9/25	Lancaster	1	K. Bourinot#	White-throated Sparrow			
10/3	Concord	1	C. Floyd	9/9	Wakefield	1	F. Vale
10/11	Hadley	1	L. Therrien	9/29	Groton	32	S. Miller
10/13	Waltham	1	J. Forbes	10/15	Newbury	61	R. Heil
10/15	Williamstown	2	C. Johnson	10/16	Boston (RKG)	37	R. Stymeist

White-throated Sparrow (continued)					
10/26	Quabog IBA	177	M. Lynch#	Red-winged Blackbird	
Harris's Sparrow				9/24	Holbrook 1500 G. d'Entremont#
10/26-31	Westboro	1 ph	B. Robo + v.o.	10/16	Huntington 448 M. Lynch#
White-crowned Sparrow				Eastern Meadowlark	
10/8	Westport	3	M. Lynch#	10/15	Lexington (DM) 1 M. Rines#
10/12	Williamstown	5	C. Johnson	10/29	Eastham (F.H.) 13 L. Waters#
10/14	GMNWR	2	J. Forbes	10/30	Saugus 1 S. Zende#
10/16	Huntington	3	M. Lynch#	Yellow-headed Blackbird	
10/28	Aquinnah	5	J. Young	9/3	Hyannis 2 M. Keleher#
10/28	Uxbridge	4	M. Lynch#	Rusty Blackbird	
Dark-eyed Junco				10/13	Maynard 7 MAS (P. Sowizral)
9/3	Ashby	1	J. Forbes	10/18	Sharon 23 L. Waters
9/3	Sandisfield	7	M. Lynch#	10/19	Lexington 9 M. Rines
10/11	P.I.	90	T. Wetmore	10/22	Carlisle 50 A. Ankers#
10/16	Huntington	112	M. Lynch#	10/24	GMNWR 8 J. Forbes
Scarlet Tanager				10/25	W. Roxbury (MP) 21 P. Peterson
9/22	P.I.	2	S. Sullivan	Common Grackle	
9/24	Braintree	1	G. d'Entremont	9/24	Holbrook 10000 G. d'Entremont#
9/25	Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#	10/3	Harwich 3000 M. Faherty
10/8	Lexington	1	J. Forbes	Brown-headed Cowbird	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak				10/9	Acton 100 J. Forbes
9/10	Lexington	3	C. Cook	10/27	Hyannis 250 D. Ely
9/14	Ware R. IBA	3	M. Lynch#	Orchard Oriole	
10/3	Quabog IBA	2	M. Lynch#	9/2	P.I. 1 J. Trimble
10/10	Cambridge	1	J. Forbes#	9/17	Raynham 1 J. Eckerson
10/22	Andover	1	D. Cooper	9/27	Quincy 1 E. Lipton
Blue Grosbeak				Baltimore Oriole	
9/17	Cumb. Farms	2	D. Peacock	9/10	Lexington 3 C. Cook
9/17	Nahant	1	G. d'Entremont	9/11	Boston (Fens) 3 C. Dalton
9/19	Danvers	1	A. Bean	9/12	P.I. 3 R. Heil
10/4	Lexington	1	C. Floyd	9/26	Groton 4 T. Murray#
10/8	Harwich	2	SSBC (GdE)	Purple Finch	
10/8-14	Middleton	1	S. Sullivan + v.o.	9/2-30	P.I. 13 b B. Flemer#
10/16	N. Truro	1	D. Clapp#	10/15	Wellfleet 16 L. Waters#
10/22	Westboro	1	T. Spahr	10/16	Huntington 28 M. Lynch#
Indigo Bunting				10/20	Framingham 12 J. Hoye#
9/18	Lexington	5	M. Rines	10/30	Lexington (DM) 14 M. Rines#
9/29	Groton	6	S. Miller	White-winged Crossbill	
10/2	Huntington	21	M. Lynch#	9/3	Russell 1 M. Lynch#
10/20	Framingham	1	J. Hoye#	Pine Siskin	
Dickcissel				9/11	Montague 2 B. Emily
9/9	P.I.	6 migr	B. Harris#	10/1	Woburn (HP) 2 M. Sprague
9/11-10/31	Reports of indiv. from 16 locations			10/11	Southwick 1 S. Kellogg
9/23	Concord	2	M. Rines	10/29	Eastham (F.H.) 1 J. Forbes
10/14	P.I.	2	S. Sullivan	10/29	Easton 1 K. Ryan
Bobolink				Evening Grosbeak	
9/10	W. Harwich	14	M. Keleher	10/10	Charlemont 2 E. Ryba
9/12	Holden	9	M. Lynch#	10/15	Andover 1 G. d'Entremont#
9/12	P.I.	9	R. Heil	10/21	Quabbin Pk 3 L. Therrien
9/20	Lexington	19	M. Rines	10/26	Melrose 1 J. McCoy
10/10	Nantucket	27	S. Kardell	10/27	Essex 1 P. Brown
				10/30	Eastham (F.H.) 1 M. Iliff

Erratum

Bird Sightings in *Bird Observer* 44.6 (December 2016), included the following record:

Snow Goose

7/31	Worthington	3	v.o.
8/6	Tolland	3	D. Holmes

It should have read:

Sandhill Crane

7/31	Worthington	3	v.o.
8/6	Tolland	3	D. Holmes

ABBREVIATIONS FOR BIRD SIGHTINGS

Locations

Location-#	MAS Breeding Bird Atlas Block	NAC	Nine Acre Corner, Concord
A.A.	Arnold Arboretum, Boston	Newbypt	Newburyport
ABC	Allen Bird Club	ONWR	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge
A.P.	Andrews Point, Rockport	PG	Public Garden, Boston
A.Pd	Allens Pond, S. Dartmouth	P.I.	Plum Island
B.	Beach	Pd	Pond
Barre F.D.	Barre Falls Dam	POP	Point of Pines, Revere
B.H.I.	Boston Harbor Islands	PR	Pinnacle Rock, Malden
B.I.	Belle Isle, E. Boston	P'town	Provincetown
B.R.	Bass Rocks, Gloucester	Pont.	Pontoosuc Lake, Lanesboro
BBC	Brookline Bird Club	R.P.	Race Point, Provincetown
BMB	Broad Meadow Brook, Worcester	Res.	Reservoir
BNC	Boston Nature Center, Mattapan	RKG	Rose Kennedy Greenway, Boston
C.B.	Crane Beach, Ipswich	S.B.	South Beach, Chatham
CGB	Coast Guard Beach, Eastham	S.N.	Sandy Neck, Barnstable
C.P.	Crooked Pond, Boxford	SRV	Sudbury River Valley
Cambr.	Cambridge	SSBC	South Shore Bird Club
CCBC	Cape Cod Bird Club	TASL	Take A Second Look, Boston Harbor Census
Corp. B.	Corporation Beach, Dennis	WBWS	Wellfleet Bay WS
Cumb. Farms	Cumberland Farms, Middleboro	WE	World's End, Hingham
DM	Dunback Meadow	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	Other Abbreviations	
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	fide	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
MI	Morris Island	S	summer (1S = 1st summer)
MNWS	Marblehead Neck WS	v.o.	various observers
MSSF	Myles Standish State Forest, Plymouth	W	winter (2W = second winter)
Mt.A.	Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambr.	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://www.birdobserver.org/Contact-Us/Submit-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 Sean Williams, 18 Parkman Street, Westborough MA 01581, or by email to seanbirder@gmail.com.

ABOUT THE COVER

Long-eared Owl

The Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) is a medium-sized owl that is notably reclusive, hunting mostly at night and perching motionless in dense foliage during the day. It is indeed a delight to find a winter roost of these elegant birds. This predominantly buff and brown owl, barred and streaked with brown below, has densely-feathered buff-colored legs. It has a round, rich buff facial disk, highlighted with white eyebrows and eyes with bright yellow irises. The facial disks are topped by two prominent ear tufts that are fairly close together and usually held upright. Females are larger and more brightly colored than males. Six subspecies are recognized, with *A. o. wilsonianus* found in eastern North America. Similar species include the Great Horned Owl, which is much larger than the Long-eared Owl; and the Short-eared Owl, which is lighter in color, lacks the ventral barring, and has much smaller ear tufts.

The Long-eared Owl's breeding range in North America stretches across Canada east of Alaska. It dips south through western United States to the Mexican border and then heads northeast from New Mexico through the Great Lakes across the northern New England states and Canada to Nova Scotia. On the West Coast, the owls breed only in a few local areas in California, Baja California, and British Columbia. They also breed sparingly along the Appalachian Mountains. In Eurasia they breed from England to Japan, and south to North and East Africa. Migration patterns of this owl are poorly known, partly because they exhibit a tendency to nomadism in response to fluctuating prey availability. Most Long-eared Owls winter within the breeding range of the species. In Massachusetts, the Long-eared Owl is considered a rare breeder and is almost certainly overlooked because of its retiring nature. In some years they are uncommon to sometimes fairly common at winter roosts. Their poorly-documented migration pattern suggests that spring migration occurs from mid-March to mid-April, and in fall from October through November.

Long-eared Owls are usually monogamous but occasionally they may be polygamous. They produce a single brood and occasionally may nest in loose colonies. The male's advertising song consists of a series of low *hoo* notes given about three seconds apart, from an elevated perch. These calls may function for both mate attraction and territorial advertisement. The male also has a zigzag display flight. Pair formation occurs while the birds are still at their winter roosts. Long-eared Owls are fairly tolerant of conspecifics, but often give threat displays to predators (including humans) by crouching with head lowered, wings drooped, and feathers ruffled. They will defend the area near their nest.

Long-eared Owls tend to nest in coniferous or mixed deciduous forests or woodlands adjacent to the open fields, grasslands, and meadows where they prefer to hunt. They nest in old stick nests of other species and usually do not add new material to the nest or even line it. Only the female develops a brood patch and she alone incubates the clutch of five to six white eggs for the four weeks until hatching. The male brings food to the female throughout the incubation period. If the nest is



Long-eared Owl, Parker River
NWR. Photograph by Sandy
Selesky.

approached, the owls may utter alarm calls and perform distraction displays. At hatching the young owls are covered with down and have closed eyes. They leave the nest in about three weeks and can fly at about five weeks of age. Initially, the male does most of the hunting for both the chicks and the female, but eventually she joins the hunting. Females tend to desert the nest after seven to eight weeks, but the male continues to feed the young for several more weeks until they are able to hunt on their own.

Long-eared Owls forage mostly at night. They fly silently, aided by the usual owl wing-feather adaptations that mute sound in flight. They typically alternate rapid wingbeats and glide about one-to-six feet from the ground. They also occasionally hover. Their hearing is excellent because their asymmetrical ear openings facilitate

pinpointing the location of sounds by triangulation. They probably locate most prey by ear. Their prey is mostly small mammals and birds which are taken from the ground, or roosting birds taken from perches. They often swallow small mammal prey whole, but birds are picked apart and the wings discarded. Most prey species have been identified from bones found in regurgitated pellets.

If flushed in the daytime, Long-eared Owls are subject to attack by hawks, falcons, and larger owls. They also are subject to nest predation by raccoons, but little else is known about nest predation. Brood reduction also may occur in years of food shortage. Long-eared Owls are not listed federally, although they appear to have experienced declines in many states. However, declines are hard to document because of the species' nomadic proclivities. Habitat alteration is also a threat that is not well documented. The extensive range of Long-eared Owls worldwide should offer them some protection so that we can continue to enjoy the thrill of seeing them at a winter roost. 🦉

William E. Davis, Jr.

ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

John Sill

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

AT A GLANCE

December 2016



DAVID M. LARSON

Regular readers of *Bird Observer* may recall that the October issue's mystery bird was a waterfowl, a female Common Eider. For December I am once again featuring a duck, a fact that I am readily disclosing because unlike the duck in the last issue, its features are unambiguous. The combination of its chunky shape, relatively flat and round-tipped bill shape, and prominent white on the wing remove all other species except possibly a Black Guillemot, which would show a sharp pointed bill and noticeably less blocky shape. No, this is a real duck!

Knowing that the bird has white on the wings narrows the field somewhat, but unfortunately a number of waterfowl species have white patches somewhere on their wings. Few ducks, however, are as blocky-looking as the mystery duck. In fact, the only ducks that typically exhibit the heavy-bodied look of the pictured species are sea ducks. Most sea ducks are among the largest ducks regularly seen in Massachusetts—the Harlequin Duck is an exception—and all of them except the Black Scoter have white somewhere in their plumage. On this duck, the white appears to be on the wing, but because of the way the wing is held, the precise location of the white is not entirely obvious.

A closer look at the mystery duck reveals a fairly short bill that is clearly rounded at the tip. The bill also has a conspicuous broad lobe extending up onto its face. A colored view of the duck on the *Bird Observer* website indicates that the bill is distinctly pinkish-orange. The bird also shows a somewhat mottled and slightly paler color to the chest than to the rest of the otherwise black body plumage. When the rounded head profile is combined with the distinctive bill shape and color, the bird can only be a King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*). The white patch showing on the wing is

located on the upper wingcoverts, but its precise position is not obvious because of the way the wing is held. The chest is contrastingly lighter brown than the black of the rest of the body and the head appears chocolate brown, which indicates that the mystery bird is an adult male in eclipse plumage. Massachusetts observers seldom get to see King Eiders in this plumage, yet when the combination of features exhibited by the mystery duck are taken together, its identification becomes straightforward.

King Eiders are uncommon winter visitors in Massachusetts, where they often consort with flocks of Common Eiders or scoters. They prefer rocky coastlines, so are most frequent along the coast of Cape Ann or similar sites along the South Shore. Sometimes seen passing headlands with flocks of other migrating sea ducks in fall, they are also rarely encountered as nonbreeding summer visitors. David Larson photographed this King Eider in Barrow, Alaska, in October 2016. 🦆

Wayne R. Petersen



NORTHERN GOSHAWK BY MARSHA SALETT

AT A GLANCE



JIM SWEENEY

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

MORE HOT BIRDS

After watching a northbound **Elegant Tern** fly past them on the outer beach, Luke Seitz and his group raced up Cape Cod to get ahead of the bird so they could photograph it. Marshall Iliff took the photo on the right.



The first rare bird of 2017, a **Boreal Chickadee** visiting feeders at a couple of homes in Peru, was posted to MassBird by Richard Guthrie and seen by many happy birders since, though at least one needed to call a tow truck after the snow where he parked turned out to be a little too deep. Richard took the photo on the left.

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