

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



Volume 30 No. 1

January 2010

Pages 1-36

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ABOUT OUR COVER

Northern Wheatears

Connecticut enjoyed a good showing by Northern Wheatears in autumn 2009, inspiring Mark Szantyr to produce our cover illustration. You can deduce the age and sex of the bird he depicted by checking out an item in this issue's Notes on Behavior, Status and Distribution.

IN THIS ISSUE



Sedge Wrens were noteworthy additions to the autumn 2009 avian array in Connecticut. Mark Szantyr sketched these two that cooperated for observers in South Windsor. Read more about this species' fall presence in Field Notes.

THE MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

2009: To Greg Hanisek

The following is the award presentation speech delivered by Steve Mayo at the COA Annual Meeting.

Mabel Osgood Wright was a late 19th and early 20th century naturalist, ornithologist, and nature writer. This year's recipient is one of the state's premier field naturalists, an expert in bird identification and distribution, and is also a prolific nature writer.

He has an innate, unrelenting enthusiasm for the natural world. He is just as comfortable keying-out a mysterious vascular plant in Gray's Manual of Botany, as he is reviewing a sighting for our Avian Records Committee.

As a young adult in northwest New Jersey, he shared his father's interest in birds. He was invited to join an informal group called the Chapman Club and was amazed to find others, who happened to be much older, with the same zeal for birding. He became a contributor to the New Jersey Audubon Society's Field Notes. He discovered the first state record Pacific Loon and presented to delighted birders, a Townsend's Warbler in his own back yard. Soon he was a Field Notes editor.

In 1992, he moved to Connecticut and never slowed down. He transitioned from New Jersey Field Notes to editing COA's Field Notes, and the Connecticut Field Notes for American Birds. In 2004 he replaced Betty Kleiner as editor of "The Connecticut Warbler."

From his Scott's Mountain Hawk Watch, he moved over to Lighthouse Point Park. And, because of his willingness to share his knowledge, attendance at that site is often higher on the Mondays when he serves as compiler. Every fall, he can be found at Lighthouse leading his popular adult education

birding course or lecturing in his soft-spoken way, at the Annual Migration Festival.

A young man named Pete Dunne convinced him to compete in the first World Series of Birding. His team went on to win four titles. Upon his arrival in Connecticut, he joined a Big Day team that blew away the 24-hour ABA record for our state.

Education and an appreciation and respect for nature is the key to conservation. This year's recipient writes a popular weekly nature column for the Waterbury Republican-American where he serves as an editor. He also writes an informative nature blog. His comments, opinions and contributions to CTBirds discussions are sought after and sometimes even requested by the Connecticut birding community.

Just two years ago, I had the privilege to award the first Betty Kleiner Memorial Award to Greg Hanisek. Today, on behalf of the membership of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, I am very pleased to also present the Mabel Osgood Wright Award to Greg Hanisek.

Correction: Frank Mantlik was the presenter of the 2008 award to Milan Bull. An incorrect presenter was listed in the article that appeared in the April 2008 issue of the Connecticut Warbler.

CITIZEN SCIENTIST: JOHN PICARD

Beginning in this issue of *The Connecticut Warbler*, we will publish periodic profiles of Connecticut citizen scientists and their work. There are many, many citizens in the state who routinely devote countless hours of their time to bird-related citizen science projects. These folks often work in relative obscurity, their only reward being the intrinsic satisfaction they receive from knowing that they are trying to make a difference. If you know of someone who is engaged in this type of work and would like to submit a profile on that person, please feel free to submit your proposal to Greg Hanisek, Editor, at ghanisek@rep-am.com or by mail at 175 Circuit Ave., Waterbury, CT 06708.

This issue's profile is on John Picard. The profile was in the format of an interview and was submitted by Tom Sayers. John's many projects include, but are not limited to, daily monitoring of the Purple Martin houses at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, monitoring of the bluebird houses at Hammonasset, monitoring other bluebird trails outside of Hammonasset, setting up the new bat house at Hammonasset, and helping to construct osprey nesting platforms there and other neighboring coastal sites. John also recently helped construct two new American kestrel nest boxes at Hammonasset and has agreed to monitor them as well.

How did you get started in your work with Purple Martins?

I had been managing a bluebird trail for 20+ years and had long wondered about the Purple Martin houses at Hammonasset Beach State Park (HBSP). As well, being a member of the Board of Directors for the Menunkatuck Audubon Society (MAS), the topic of the martins at the HBSP was often discussed. We learned that Charlie Rafford had been monitoring the houses and collecting the data since 1991. Coincidentally, Charlie was looking for someone to take over for him so I picked up where he left off. Long story short, I was fortunate enough to be in the right place at the

right time within the perfect organization to make a contribution to this noteworthy cause.

How long have you been actively involved in your work with Purple Martins?

The martins have been teaching me since 2005, five nesting seasons ago.

For those who might not know, could you please share with us what monitoring martin houses entails?

There are many methods and levels of monitoring a martin colony, aka, becoming a Purple Martin landlord. One can take a more casual approach to monitoring by doing nest checks once or twice a week and have some level of success without extending too much time and effort. If you want to be as successful as possible, more frequent or daily nest checks will result in greater success. Performing daily



Photo by Shannon Schiesser.



Purple Martins at Hammonasset Beach State Park by John Picard



nest checks will condition the birds to your presence and when done properly, does not disturb the birds. Monitoring consists of removing House Sparrows (and starlings if you do not have starling resistant openings), cleaning the nest boxes, removing nest parasites, changing the nesting material as needed, removing dead birds and any eggs that do not hatch, checking for capped eggs, recording dates of events (nest building, egg laying, egg hatching, age and number of fledged birds), returning fallen fledglings to the proper nest cavity... Whenever possible, the best approach to monitoring is to share the load with like-minded citizen scientists; Shannon Schiesser and John Pfitzner are my monitoring partners and have proven to be invaluable.

What have you found to be the most difficult part of your work with Purple Martins?

That would be the two variables that we have no direct control of: the weather and invasive species (starlings and House Sparrows).

The weather has an incredible influence on the success of the martins; too many cold and rainy days during the nesting season will prevent the martins from finding enough flying insects to sustain their young and feed themselves. The opposite effect is also detrimental; too many extremely hot and dry days will suppress the flying insect population and activity, which again will result in a loss of food source for the martins.

Fortunately, the new doors that the MAS purchased for the martin houses are effective at preventing starlings from entering the nest cavities. Unfortunately, any nest cavity entrance that a martin can fit through, so too can a House Sparrow. House Sparrows and starlings, if not kept in check, can and will decimate a martin colony.

Could you share with us some of your data from the last couple of years as it pertains to eggs laid, number of birds fledged, etc.?

Keeping accurate records is an important part of the monitoring process. Below is a summary of the Purple Martin data sheets for 2005 – 2009; the end result is 200 martins fledged after 5 years of unforgettable birding experiences. Maintaining or managing a nest box or a series of nest boxes is the next logical step to enhancing your knowledge of birds and accepting responsibility for their survival. Similar to most topics, you can stay home and read all the books you can get your hands on about your favorite subject, but you will never be able to gain the benefit of practical hands-on, in-the-field experience.

2005-2009 Hammonasset Purple Martin Nest Box Results			
2005: 2 original old houses			
	# of eggs	# of eggs hatched	# fledged
Total: 2005	60	51	25
Total: 2005	60	51	25
2006: 1 original old house and 4 new houses, A - D			
	# of eggs	# of eggs hatched	# fledged
Total: 2006	55	46	37
Total: 2005 - 2006	115	97	62
2007: 4 houses, A - D			
	# of eggs	# of eggs hatched	# fledged
Total: 2007	41	37	32
Total: 2005 - 2007	156	134	94
2008: 4 houses, A - D			
	# of eggs	# of eggs hatched	# fledged
Total: 2008	68	58	50
Total: 2005 - 2008	224	192	144
2009: 4 houses, A - D			
	# of eggs	# of eggs hatched	# fledged
Total: 2009	125	107	56
Total: 2005 - 2009	349	299	200

Do you monitor other houses at Hammonasset Beach State Park other than the two at the Meigs Point Nature Center?

Aside from the four martin houses (two at the Meigs Point Nature Center and two near Chase Pond), Shannon, John and I monitor 30 Tree Swallow boxes, four Osprey platforms, and, new this year, two American Kestrel boxes courtesy of Tom Sayers.

I also have 30 bluebird boxes that I monitor near my home in Clinton. The great thing about maintaining a bluebird trail is that the birds don't necessarily know that the houses are intended for bluebirds; as a result, you can experience the nesting behaviors of other cavity-nesting birds as well, e.g., Tufted Titmice, House Wrens, Black-capped Chickadees, Tree Swallows and, of course, House Sparrows. Once again, the importance of monitoring cannot be emphasized enough.

What other citizen science projects have you been involved with?

Both Shannon and I are the Podunk Site coordinators for CAMP (CT Amphibian Monitoring Project), which is located in Madison. We both have participated in banding the Osprey chicks with Julie Victoria of Connecticut DEP at HBSP. Also, I was able to participate in the recent Saltmarsh /Seaside Sparrow surveys at HBSP. Prior to this, I was the Chair of the Clinton Inland Wetlands and Conservation Comm. for nine years, and am currently the Conservation Chair for the MAS and a member of the Open Space Advisory Committee in Clinton.

Feel free to share here any other thoughts you might have on your work or citizen science projects in general.

Some of the benefits of recruiting citizen scientists, a.k.a. volunteers, include the harnessing of new and enthused members to collect data and provide valuable services, with no expectations of any form of compensation. By first making an emotional connection with their interests, the volunteers will develop a thorough understanding, and then finally, a



*Photo by Mark Szantyr
Female Purple Martins do most of the nest building, but
males like this one at HBSP sometimes add green leaves
to the nest.*

heightened sense of responsibility. Often times, dedicated volunteers are willing to travel long distances, under poor conditions, with no funding, in exchange for an experience that is of great interest and value to them. The results and findings of these volunteers can then be funneled back to established organizations that may be limited in their resources, scope and capacity, e.g., the Purple Martin Conservation Association and the Christmas Bird Count. There is much to be said about the contributions that volunteers make towards the efforts of conservation.

BOOKS ON BIRDS

By Alan Brush

ARCHAEOPTERYX. The Icon of Evolution. 2009. by Peter Wellnhofer. Revised English Edition of the 1st German Edition. Translated by F Haase. 208 pages. Verlag Dr. Friedrich Pfeil. Munchen, Germany.

In every ornithology text, in every course on birds or evolution, in every museum display on birds, *Archaeopteryx* represented by 10 specimens and a single fossil feather has been considered the Urvogel. This fossil, the predecessor of all living birds, from Jurassic times, was probably nothing more than a small dinosaur with feathers. *Archaeopteryx* lived around 150 million years ago in what is now Germany. The first fossil evidence, a single feather, was found in 1862, and an essentially complete skeleton with feathers was found shortly after Charles Darwin published his tome on origin of species. T H Huxley immediately recognized *Archaeopteryx* as an intermediate form that linked reptiles and birds and proposed that it was a missing link that might have been predicted by Darwin's hypothesis. The implications were immense as it was the only one known at the time, and it has remained an "icon of evolution".

Peter Wellnhofer, an expert and world leader on the study of the Jurassic fossils of the Solnhofen, has provided a magnificent survey of all the *Archaeopteryx* material. The oversized pages encompass the largest intellectual framework possible and includes the history of the Solnhofen plattenkalk and its stone industry (which goes back to Roman times), the Bavarian paleo-environment, geology, the processes of fossilization and preservation, evolution, natural history, and politics. *Archaeopteryx* may be the world's best-known fossil. It is the oldest bird-like creature with feathers, and feathers have in fact been considered one of the signature properties of birds. Wellnhofer writes about the evolution of feathers, and the origin of flight. How well *Archaeopteryx* could fly has been



Peter Wellnhofer with an Archaeopteryx illustration.

debated since its discovery, and the evolutionary origins of feathers and flight are still debated today.

All known specimens of *Archaeopteryx* are included and profusely illustrated. The book seems to contain every published image back to the first published by Woodward in 1862 to the contemporary rendition by O. Schaumberger's "A dinosaur dons a cloak of feathers." The myriad illustrations include photographs, technical drawings, reconstructions, and images of the important places and players. In addition to *Archaeopteryx*, Solnhofen has also yielded fossils of fish, jellyfish, squid, shrimp, Pterosaurs, aquatic and terrestrial plants, plesiosaurs, and spectacular lacewings and dragonflies. The important personages include Alois Senefelder, an inventor who first used Solnhofen stones to produce lithographs, and Basilius Besler, the collector who was first to describe Solnhofen fossils. These men are incorporated right along with the scientists Darwin, Huxley, Owen and Ostrom.

The core of the text is filled with detailed descriptions of the specimens. The narrative is informative, not overwhelming in detail, and constructs a clear picture of each specimen, its history, and significance. The first intact specimen was dis-

covered by H. von Meyer, who earlier had described a single feather fossil, to which he assigned a scientific name. Subsequently, when the entire specimen was described by Sir Richard Owen, there arose conflicts with the naming of the specimen. This problem and others of taxonomic nomenclature are pointed out and their solution presented. The highlights are the discussion and analysis of the interpretation of the individual specimens, topics Wellnhofer knows intimately.

At this point you have literally all you would ever want to know about these gems of science. Not only are the illustrations marvelous, but each section includes the specimen's history, a detailed description, and some of the characters (both technical and human) involved. As with nomenclature, he discusses the significance of the differences in size but not proportions among specimens, and an assortment of interesting tidbits involving changes in ownership, controversy (are the feathers faked?), and recent attempts at constructing the most accurate phylogeny. Interest is added to the stories as Wellnhofer relates the debates, the problems, politics and science with just enough detail to make the stories fascinating. Included is how OC Marsh of Yale passed up buying one specimen and why the first, and probably most complete, specimen resides in London rather than Berlin.

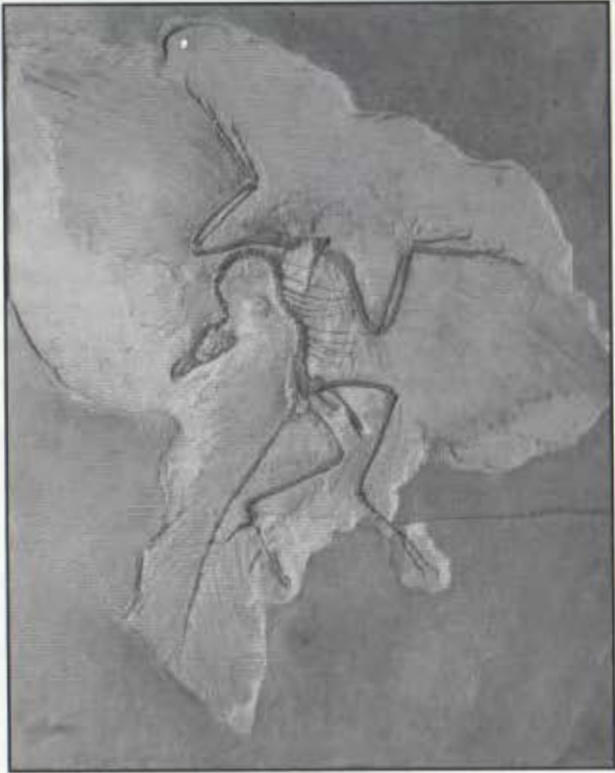
There is still more. Wellnhofer brings to light the current debate on the flight capacities of *Archaeopteryx*, its ability to perch, the nature of the plumage, and possible diet. There are questions regarding specialized skeletal features, and especially similarities to modern birds and dinosaurs. One of the most imaginative and intriguing sections cover the fascinating attempts at restorations to depict the living animals. Finally, "The Meaning of *Archaeopteryx*" summarizes the arguments in light of the material developed here to discuss both the origin and the evolution of birds themselves. The recent discovery of feathered dinosaurs, more primitive than *Archaeopteryx*, has engendered further debate.

Work on *Archaeopteryx* has generated an entire literature. The story of the fossil's discovery and its impact on the scientific

world and the larger community has been told and retold, most recently by Sean Carroll in:

Remarkable Creatures. Epic Adventures in the Search for the Origins of Species. 2009. xix+331 pgs. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Boston.

Amid the controversy, Wellnhofer adds geological and paleontological perspectives, Solnhofen history, and the amazing details of the fossils themselves. His arguments for its evolutionary significance are powerful and convincing.



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Summer, June 1 to July 31, 2009

By Greg Hanisek

It's been a long time since birders snoozed between spring's warblers and autumn's shorebirds and raptors. Interesting and complex things happen in June and July, which is why this seasonal report has for a number of years been divided into four segments: northbound migration, which spills over well into June; southbound migration, which starts in late June and gains strong momentum in July; the breeding season, which is really the heart of summer; and those interesting cross currents of lingerers, wanderers and strays. This year the last category produced a stellar array of rarities, but probably the signal event was a cold, wet June that may have curtailed successful breeding for some species. How cold and wet? Dennis Varza checked the data from Sikorsky Airport in Stratford, which recorded an average June temperature of 62.2 F. That was 2.4 degrees below normal. The monthly rainfall of 6.42 inches was 2.85 inches above normal.

Northbound migration

A Common Loon in breeding plumage stopped at Nepaug Reservoir in Canton on June 15 (PCa), with one on Woodridge Lake, Goshen, the day before (KF). A late Greater Yellowlegs was at Lords Cove, Old Lyme, on June 8 (HG). Nine Red Knots were at Long Beach, Stratford, on June 4, a good total by recent standards (CB). Three were still at Milford Point on June 12 (FM), with four at Griswold Point, Old Lyme, on June 13 (HG) and one at Greenwich Point on June 14 (MSa et al.). Eight Semipalmated Sandpipers remained at Long Beach, Stratford, until June 15 (FM). On June 2, Sandy Point in West Haven held 10 White-rumped Sandpipers (JO), as did Short Beach in Stratford on June 4 (FM). Three were at Long Beach in Stratford on June 2-5 (CB, SK).

A long-staying **White-winged Dove** was heard calling a

number of times in late May and early June in the Branford neighborhood where it first appeared in February 2007, and it was seen perched on a wire on June 3 (DL). A flock of 26 Common Nighthawks fed over Point Folly at Bantam Lake, Litchfield, on June 1 (DRo). A Chimney Swift roost in a chimney in downtown Southington held about 80 birds in late May, increasing to 120 entering from 8 to 9 p.m. on June 3 (MBa). Presumably at least some of these birds will breed, either locally or more likely somewhere farther north.

An Olive-sided Flycatcher was in West Hartland on June 11 (PCa). Two Nashville Warblers, not a species noted for late movements, were singing at Milford Point on June 4 (FG). A Mourning Warbler, typically a late mover, was banded on June 4 at Birdcraft Museum in Fairfield (KV). An observer provided a very good description of a Lincoln's Sparrow found on the late date of June 8 in Bristol (MK).

Southbound migration

A female Northern Pintail

was probably on the move on July 21 at Griswold Point, Old Lyme (HG). The Stratford-Milford area held six species of migrant shorebirds July 9 (FM). The first Whimbrel flew by Long Beach, Stratford, on July 20 (DV), followed by three the next day at Short Beach, Stratford (FM). A total of 10 were noted through the end of July, which is more than usual. The season's only Marbled Godwit was found July 26 at Sandy Point, West Haven (JO). The Semipalmated Sandpiper count reached 600 at Milford Point on July 23 (DV), with 1900 present on July 30 (FM). The first three Pectoral Sandpipers appeared July 22 at Windham Airport (PR). A good early flock of 25 Short-billed Dowitchers was at HBSP on July 10 (DRu), followed by c. 100 at Short Beach on July 23 (DV). A Long-billed Dowitcher arrived at Stratford Marina on July 28 (FM). The first Black Tern was at Stratford Point on July 20 (SK, CB).

More than 150 Tree Swallows were staging June 28 on White Hollow Road in Sharon (AG), and an unusual staging concentration

of c. 200 Northern Rough-winged Swallows was on the Farmington River in the Poquonock section of Windsor on July 3 (PDe), followed by a count of 117 on July 22 (JWo). Four species of swallows were moving in small numbers off Milford and Stratford beginning June 29 (FG, TL). A flock of 150+ staging Common Grackles was headed for a Phragmites roost on the Housatonic River in Stratford on the evening of July 7 (FM).

Lingerers, wanderers and strays

A male and a female Northern Pintail were at Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, (hereafter HBSP) on June 6 (JCf), and a drake was at Milford Point June 25 (KB). A male Green-winged Teal on July 8 at Watch Rock in Old Lyme seemed early for a southbound migrant (HG), although migrants do begin to appear later in the summer. A pair of Ring-necked Ducks was on the Saugatuck River in Redding on June 19 (TG). A Greater Scaup was at Greenwich Point on June 13 (MSa et al.). An immature male King Eider remained at

HBSP throughout the season (m.ob.). Nine female Common Eiders flew by Eastern Point, Groton, on July 3 (JRe), and four were at Avery Point, Groton, on July 12 (GW). Despite nesting just outside Connecticut waters, this species has not yet been confirmed breeding here. Three Surf Scoters were off HBSP June 15-17 (FM et al.), with one adult male present through the season (m.ob.). Two White-winged Scoters were at Greenwich Point June 14 (MSa), and one was at HBSP on July 24 (THo). During June, there were up to seven Long-tailed Ducks at the mouth of the Housatonic River in Milford/Stratford (FM et al.), and four were at the mouth of the Saugatuck River in Westport (TG et al.). Three were at Greenwich Point June 13 (MSa et al.). A Red-breasted Merganser at Long Beach, Stratford, was the only one reported this summer (DV). An adult male Ruddy Duck rested on Scovill Reservoir in Wolcott, on July 17 (GH).

Two Northern Bobwhites singing at a private residence in Guilford on July 4 were likely the result of gun club releases (JRe). The same



Photo by Mark Szantyr
One of two Cattle Egrets that enjoyed an extended stay at Hammonasset Beach State Park.

likely applies to one singing July 9 in Coventry (WY). The state's last known breeding locations, centered in the far southeast, are apparently no longer active. An unusual late flurry of late Horned Grebes produced one in alternate plumage June 8 at Bantam L., Litchfield, that stayed for about a week (BI, RBe et al.). Two in alternate plumage were found off the Silver Beach area of Milford on June 21 and also stayed for more than a week (SS, MSc), and one in alternate plumage was at HBSP on June 25 (RBc). The high count of Wilson's Storm-Petrels was 26 off Stonington Point on July 12 (PR), following the first of the season June 20 from a ferry off Waterford

(GW, PR). Some were seen as far west as Norwalk and Stamford (LF et al.). Single Tricolored Herons were at HBSP on July 5 (FH, THo) and at McKinney Refuge, Stratford, on July 15 (CN). A Cattle Egret at HBSP on June 13-15 (JCo, LT et al.) was joined by a second on June 16-26 (JCa, MR et al.). A few Black-crowned Night Herons reported well up the Naugatuck and Connecticut rivers in late July were probably post-breeding birds (BB, PCi). Three Glossy Ibis were unusual inland at Storrs on July 16 (SMo), followed by a single nearby in Windham on July 19 (SMo). A seasonal highlight was a **White-faced Ibis** found July 30 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford

(FG et al.). It foraged with a group of c. 20 Glossy Ibis until at least Aug.6 (m.ob). A Lesser Yellowlegs June 17 at McKinney Refuge in Stratford fell between typical northbound and southbound dates for this species (CB, PS). The same could be said for a Sanderling and a Dunlin on June 19 at Short Beach, Stratford (F&LM).

Two Bonaparte's Gulls were still at Milford Point on June 4 (RPa). The season's only Lesser Black-backed Gull, a second- or third-year bird, was at Penfield Reef, Fairfield, on June 30 (DV). An unusual mid-summer concentration of gulls June 25 at Short Beach comprised 500 each of Herring and

Ring-billed Gulls as well as 158 Laughing Gulls (FM). A single Laughing Gull and Common Tern were unexpected inland on June 14 in a parking lot in East Hartford with a flock of Ring-billed Gulls (BW, JVa). The season's only reports of Caspian Terns were singles June 23 at Short Beach in Stratford (FM) and June 29 off Stratford Point (TL), very likely involving the same individual. Single Royal Terns were at Penfield Reef, Fairfield, on July 22 (JRa, AB), and at Griswold Point, Old Lyme, on July 31 (HG). "Several" were feeding in Norwalk Harbor on July 23 (LF). The first Forster's Tern was at Short Beach on July 11 (FM), followed by



*Photo by Mark Szantyr
This White-faced Ibis was found on July 30 in Milford.*



Photo by Fran Zygmunt

One of two Sedge Wrens found in South Windsor in July.

seven at Lords Cove, Old Lyme on July 22 (HG).

Adult Red-headed Woodpeckers were found June 24 on private property in Norwalk (JBe) and July 17 through the end of the period in Middlebury (GH et al.). These fall into the catch-all category because of the lack of confirmed breeding records for the state. A **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** was present June 21-23 at Trout Brook Valley Preserve in Easton (PDa). The bird proved hard to find after the initial sighting but video footage was obtained (JD). A Red-breasted Nuthatch made one of the species' occasional mid-summer appearances outside of

breeding habitat on July 24 in Wallingford (MM). A **Sedge Wren** was found July 1 at Station 43 in South Windsor, and subsequent observations showed two singing birds were present for several weeks (PCi). Another singing bird was found July 5 in hay fields in Roxbury (PDu). In neither case was any evidence of breeding obtained. This species is noted for enigmatic mid- to late summer appearances in good breeding habitat. A Ruby-crowned Kinglet was a mid-summer anomaly July 15 in Goshen (DS). Despite all the interesting rarities, the bird of the season might have been the Cedar Waxwing, which was

present in enormous numbers. For much of the summer it seemed impossible to get out of a car anywhere in the state without seeing or hearing them. Many eventually settled down to nest, but their widespread presence reminded us that this is the poster bird for wandering tendencies. An adult male **Western Tanager** was photographed July 14 in a yard in Branford (DH fide DL), providing a first summer report for this very rare visitor that is most often found in late fall or early winter. A singing Grasshopper Sparrow was far from known breeding areas June 7 in New Milford (FZ). An adult male **Painted Bunting** made a brief visit to a private garden in Mystic on June 20 (fide MJ). A White-throated Sparrow present through at least July 2 in a Madison yard was presumably a lingering non-breeder (JG fide JCo).

The breeding season

A female Common Merganser escorted 12 downy young June 2 on the Pomperaug River in Southbury (SB). A Ruffed Grouse on July 19 at Walden Preserve in Salem was one of the few recent

reports away from the northwest area (FH, THo). A Pied-billed Grebe was seen in late June at Hessekey Meadows in Woodbury, a likely breeding locale (RN). Not far from the Charles Island breeding colony in Milford, the flats off Short Beach, Stratford, held 40 each of Great Egret, Snowy Egret and Black-crowned Night Heron on June 25 (FM). At Compo Beach and Cove in Westport, near the Cockenoe Island nesting colony, 75 Snowy Egrets, 55 Great Egrets and 75 Black-crowned Night Herons were present June 24 (FM). Two Black-crowned Night Herons flying over Meriden on June 29 might have been indicative of a seldom-recorded inland nesting (PCo). Nesting also was suspected in the vicinity of Shepaug Dam in Southbury (RN). A group of 12 Yellow-crowned Night Herons on the Great Meadows marshes in Stratford on June 21 exemplified this species' strong breeding presence along the southwest coast (LT). An adult and two immatures on July 29 at Fence Creek, Madison, were well east of the species' stronghold (TS).

The pair of **Mississippi Kites**



*Photo by Mark Szantyr
One of the breeding Mississippi Kites in Simsbury clutches
a Tree Swallow.*

that nested successfully in Simsbury last summer, a first for Connecticut, were observed brooding eggs or small young July 2 at the same location (JWe). On July 19 a chick judged to be about a week old was seen at the nest (JWe). The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection logged 20 pairs of Bald Eagles state-wide. They comprised one territorial pair, one inactive pair and 18 active pairs. Of the 18 active pairs, one pair failed and the remaining 17

fledged 31 chicks (JV_i). Single Northern Goshawks were at McLean Game Refuge in Granby on June 27 (PC_i, CL), at Swendsen Farm Preserve, Bethlehem, on June 30 (JM) and at Cockaponset State Forest, Killingworth, on July 17 (JHi). Northern Harriers apparently did not nest at the state's only known site in the Stratford Great Meadows this year (CB), but several summer observations were made in the Great Island area of Old Lyme (HG) and at Barn Island, Stonington.

Eleven reports of American Kestrels were good by recent standards (m.ob.)

The DEP's monitoring of Piping Plover nest sites recorded 44 pairs that fledged 74 chicks (JVi). An extremely high tide on June 30 facilitated a count of 45 Willets, including two chicks, at the Stratford Great Meadows (FM). Tern breeding overall was poor, but Falkner Island off Guilford was a strong exception, with 45 pairs of Roseate Terns and 3000+ pairs of Common Terns, the latter representing 90 percent of the state breeding population (RPO). The poor tern breeding season away from Falkner Island was exemplified by an active observer's note that 38 Common Terns on June 23 at Short Beach, Stratford, was the most he'd seen in southwest Connecticut for the year up to that point (FM). However, three days later he found 130 on bars at the mouth of the Housatonic River (FM). About 150 Least Terns were feeding off Long Beach, Stratford, on June 8, but no significant nesting materialized there (BB, RDo). A colony of up to 40 was at Griswold Point, Old Lyme, in early

June (HG), and c. 40 were at HBSP on June 17 (CEL). The normally productive colony at Sandy Point, West Haven, was inactive. A birder who has monitored the site for a number years noted that Peregrine Falcons were much more prevalent there this year than in the past (MSt). Although six Black Skimmers were at Sandy Point on June 2, no nesting was recorded this year (MBu et al.). Up to 20 non-breeders gathered in the Cosey Beach area of East Haven in late May and early June (BDe).

After a very slow spring season for both cuckoos, summer was no different. An active observer did not hear or see a single one over the summer in Nehantic State Forest, a good spot for both species, but on July 25 he found four Yellow-billed and one Black-billed in a relatively small area of Pachaug State Forest in Voluntown (DP). The most unexpected report involved a Black-billed Cuckoo sitting on a handrail to a building on Cottage Street in New Haven on June 28 (MA). A Barn Owl was seen in Bridgeport on June 15 (FM, CB). The best breeding concentra-

tion of Whip-poor-wills is in the southeast, exemplified by three calling on June 1 in Pachaug State Forest in Voluntown (BH) and five calling July 2 in a North Stonington section of the forest (BH). Elsewhere reports came from Naugatuck (PDn), Southington (JA) and Wolcott (JS). A few reports of calling Common Nighthawks in New Haven were the only ones noted from former urban nesting areas (MA). Although probably not part of a breeding pair, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker in a yard in Westport on June 30 suggested the kind of prospecting that has led to the species' southward march as

a breeder in the state (TG). A juvenile on July 22 in Scotland shows that the movement also has an eastward component (BH).

An Acadian Flycatcher, widely and sparsely scattered in the northern tier, was at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield on June 1 (DRo). Another was at Whittemore Sanctuary in Woodbury on July 4 (GH). A Common Raven on June 16 in Milford was the observer's first for that town, as the statewide increase continues (FG). Along the same lines, one was on Long Beach Blvd., Stratford, on July 18 (LT). Horned Larks have become very scarce and local



*Photo by Twan Leenders
This juvenile Horned Lark was at Stratford
Point on July 7.*

as breeders, so discovery of a bird in juvenile plumage July 7 at Stratford Point was heartening (TL). A colony of more than 20 Purple Martins at Lake Waramaug Country Club in New Preston, one of very few in the northern tier, occupied two decrepit houses that were no longer present this winter (AD). However, a small group of martins nested for the first time in decades on the UConn campus in Storrs, where at least two young fledged (DM et al.). The Cliff Swallow colony at Shepaug Dam in Southbury held up to 150 birds, but nesting success was considered poor due to the cold, wet season (RN). By July 15 most had dispersed. A Winter Wren was singing on territory June 27 on Aspetuck Land Trust property in Weston, in the far southwest corner of the state (CB). Golden-crowned Kinglets were confirmed nesting at two sites in Morris. Adults were seen feeding two fledged young at one location on June 14, and on Aug. 4 a pair at a second location was seen feeding three fledged young (DRo). Territorial birds, but no confirmed nestings, were noted

at Catlin Woods at White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield and at four locations on Metropolitan District Commission property in Barkhamsted (DRo). Brown Thrashers were widely reported, with five pairs noted at Southbury Training School (RN). The only Brewster's Warbler report came from West Hartford on June 26 (PCi). A Nashville Warbler sang in Great Mountain Forest, Norfolk, on July 7 (HB). A Northern Parula sang in Mianus River Park, Greenwich, on June 19 (SMu), and another sang in West Hartland on June 25 (PCa). A singing male **Yellow-throated Warbler** was in Pachaug State Forest, Voluntown, on June 27 (RJ). One was in this area, a potential breeding site, in 2008 as well.

Survey work June 17 at HBSP produced counts of 15+ Seaside Sparrows and 65+ Saltmarsh Sparrows (CEI). Two Eastern Meadowlarks each at two Bloomfield locations showed that at least a few persist in the Greater Hartford area (PCi). Some Pine Siskins were still visiting feeders in early June, such as 35 at a feeder in Hamden that included begging young

(JZ, CZ). On June 3 a Sterling feeder had up to eight, and the owner said he had then had them at his feeder for 155 consecutive days (RDi). On June 9 in a Greenwich yard eight included adults feeding fledglings (TB). An exodus was also noted around this time, with daily flyovers in Goshen during the first week of June (KF). The Hamden birds also thinned out quickly in mid-June (JZ). A pair of Evening Grosbeaks came to a feeder in Cornwall on June 20 (fide AG).

Exotics: A Golden Pheasant was present all summer in fields in the Grassy Hill area of Woodbury (DT).

For additional information on the nesting season, see the Summer Bird Count report in the October issue of the Connecticut Warbler.

Observers: Jayne Amico, Mark Aronson, Jim Bair (JBa), Bill Banks, Tom Baptist, Charlie Barnard, Melissa Baston (MBA), Hope Batcheller, Larry Bauscher, Joe Bear (JBe), Richard Becker (RBc), Ray Belding (RBe), Sharon Binner, Milan Bull (MBu), Alex Burdo, Kevin Burgio, Dana Campbell, Jim Carr (JCa), Paul Carrier (PCa), Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), J. Clifford (JCl), Jan Collins (JCl), Jerry Connolly (JCo), Patrick Comins (PCo), Annette Cunniffe, Peter Davenport (PDa), Peter De-

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NOTES ON BEHAVIOR, STATUS AND DISTRIBUTION

Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) intergrade at Bluff Point State Park, Groton

By Glenn Williams

Migrant traps and birding hotspots are particularly fun for several reasons. The anticipation and thrill of seeing a rare species or the spectacle of seeing large numbers of birds are two of the strongest motivations for getting out of the house before dawn. One might see a Connecticut Warbler - or more Northern Parulas than one has seen all year. Hotspots also increase one's chances of seeing something a little different.

On September 20, 2009, Phil Rusch, Peter Copabianco, Edie Canning, Ron Cochran and I were watching the morning flight of fall migrants at the northwest corner of Bluff Point State Park in Groton for about three hours starting at sunrise. We had approximately 250 warblers of thirteen species including Tennessee Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler and Wilson's Warbler. The most numerous species of the day were Northern Parula (62) and Blackpoll Warbler (51). As expected there was a good push of non-warblers with 28 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers being most notable. It was also the first good day of flicker movement for the season at Bluff Point with about 50.

As the morning flight was ending at about 07:40 hours and just minutes after Phil mentioned that he would like to see a "red-shafted" flicker, one flew out of the "hot corner." Its red underwings and undertail were amazingly bright and red as it came out of trees. Though the red seemed to glow, there was a pinkish hue to the red and we debated whether it was as red as a red-shafted should be. Looking at Sibley's guide later, we agreed that the bird showed as much red as the illustration of red-shafted - in fact it seemed to stand out more in the field than one would expect from the picture. The bird landed back-to on a distant utility pole near the train tracks

along the northern border of the park and Peter managed a poor photograph of the bird, as his big lens was in the car. The bird was a female, as evident by the lack of malar stripe, and the only observable "yellow-shafted" trait was a red nape crescent. Though we thought the bird's face was plain and more uniformly gray, Peter's photo later showed a brown face with a gray crown more typical of a "yellow-shafted." We had seen an intergrade of the "red-shafted" and "yellow-shafted" races of the Northern Flicker and not a true "red-shafted" Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus cafer*). The term intergrade is used instead of hybrid, as both are races of the same species.

At one time the flickers of North America were divided into three species; the Gilded of the Southwest, Red-shafted west of the Rockies, and Yellow-shafted east of the Rockies. These were lumped into one species for a time before Gilded Flicker was again given species status. Red-shafted and yellow-shafted flickers interbreed across a broad range, and there appears to be no barrier to their interbreeding, so they have remained one species.

The Northern Flicker races form intergrades across the Great Plains. At one time, this vast region provided a very effective breeding barrier for many woodland species, and closely related birds evolved separately. As European-Americans colonized this region, they planted trees and created habitat for such species and allowed for range expansion from east and west. Many similar species began to interbreed much more frequently and form hybrids or intergrades. Examples include the races of Northern Flicker, races of Tufted Titmice (northern and black-crested), Indigo and Lazuli Buntings, Rose-breasted and Black-headed Grosbeaks, Eastern and Spotted Towhees, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks and Baltimore and Bullock's Orioles. The details of the splitting and lumping are complicated and an ongoing dynamic.

Investigating the occurrence of "red-shafted" Northern Flicker and intergrades in the Northeast, I could find no records of pure "red-shafted" Northern Flickers. National Geographic's *Complete Birds of North America* states that "Red-shafted is

casual east to Manitoba, western Missouri, eastern Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana; possibly further east, but most or all may not be pure Red-shafted." For intergrades in Connecticut in addition to the 20 Sept 09 bird, Mark Szantyr reports that he had a similar bird at Flanders Nature Center in Woodbury in the mid-80's during peak fall flicker migration. A man brought Frank Gallo some red-shafted type feathers found in the New Canaan area at around the same time period. A few years ago, Fred Norton had a red-shafted type flicker fly through the "hot corner" of Bluff Point but could not rule out an intergrade with his in-flight look. Dave Provencher has logged more hours at Bluff Point than anyone and has witnessed some amazing migration days, including a 4000+ flicker fantasia during one of the finest morning flights ever recorded at the park. Though he has noted a few flickers with more orangey underwings, he has not seen one with clearly red underwings.

Manomet Bird Observatory in Plymouth, Mass., examined Northern Flickers caught for banding, looking for evidence of pure red-shafted or intergrades from 1978 to 1981. Though no pure red-shafteds were found, 22 out of 91 fall flickers (24%) were found to be intergrades. All spring birds were pure yellow-shafted. The percentage seems astoundingly high to anyone who has observed fall flickers in New England with red-shafted in mind. I assume that many of the red-shafted traits noted were subtle and not readily observable in the field. Oklahoma hosts both races as nesters, though yellow-shafted predominates. Red-shafted nests in the western panhandle and is present in the rest of Oklahoma only during migration and winter. Specimens collected in Oklahoma from 1921 to 1998 and stored at Cameron University and the University of Oklahoma were examined for intergrades. Of the 179 Northern Flickers, 13% were red-shafted, 30% were intergrades, and 57% yellow-shafted. This data from a state in the intergrade zone makes the 24% observed at Manomet particularly remarkable. Of course, we are comparing Massachusetts migration numbers to presumed year-round numbers in Oklahoma.

When looking for red-shafted or intergrade Northern Flickers, there are six main traits.

Shaft color – yellow-shafted has yellow wing linings and retrices, red-shafted has red.

Nape crescent – yellow-shafted has a red nape crescent in both sexes, red-shafted has no nape crescent.

Malar stripe color – yellow-shafted males have a black malar stripe, red-shafted males have a red malar stripe

Crown color – yellow-shafted has a gray crown, red-shafted's is brown

Face and throat color – Yellow-shafted has a brown face and throat, red-shafted's are gray

Intergrades show a mix of the above traits. The intergrades in Oklahoma were reported as tending to look more like the red-shafted race.

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The age and sex of Northern Wheatears

In September 2009 Northern Wheatears were found on consecutive days (on 4 September at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison by Paul Fusco and on 5 September at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford by Mona Cavallero and Paul Desjardins). Photos and descriptions of the two birds quickly dispelled questions about whether one individual was involved in both sightings. The Madison bird was a female/first-winter while the Stratford bird was an adult male. On the CTBirds listserve, Julian Hough offered a quick primer on aging and sexing this species. Below is an excerpt on the subject from an article Julian wrote in the January 1997 Connecticut Warbler:

"Adult Northern Wheatears undergo a complete molt after the breeding season and, like first year birds, look very neat and pristine in the fall (almost all Connecticut records have occurred in September - Editor). As a result, except for fall adult males, which still show blackish lores and dark ear coverts, aging in the field is generally not reliable. Any non-adult male Northern Wheatear in fall should be referred to as 'female or first-winter.'

"Summer plumage is attained in early spring when the broad, buffy feather fringes wear off to reveal the brighter summer dress below."

Regarding geographical variation, Julian noted: "As would be expected, all Northern Wheatears recorded in eastern North America appear to belong to the Greenland race *leucorhoa*, being on average longer-winged and more richly plumaged than nominate *oenanthe*."

In fall 2009, a third Northern Wheatear appeared a bit on the late side from 1-4 October at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks (Rollin Tebbetts). Using the criteria noted above it could be designated a female/first winter.



Photo by Julian Hough
Adult male Northern Wheatear at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford, on 6 September 2009.



Photo by Paul Fusco
Female/first winter Northern Wheatear at Hammonasset Beach State Park on 4 September 2009.

A Predatory Woodpecker

Ed Doyle of Litchfield offered the following observation from June 17, 2009:

"We have a pair of Eastern Bluebirds that have been raising their brood in a birdhouse that we can view out of our kitchen window. As we were eating breakfast and watching the male and female come and go, a Red-bellied Woodpecker swooped down and stuck its head in the birdhouse and came out with a chick, which it proceeded to eat in plain view. I didn't know woodpeckers did this kind of deed."

Editor's Note: This predatory behavior is not well-known. In his classic monograph series, Arthur Cleveland Bent does not mention predation on nestling birds in his "Life Histories of North American Woodpeckers." In an inventory of animal food items, the only vertebrate mentioned is a small tree frog. However John K. Terres, in "The Audubon Encyclopedia of North American Birds," says: "... rather rarely reported to carry away or eat eggs or young of other birds." A search of the literature shows that some authors have considered this type predation significant. In an article in *Southeastern Naturalist* by Kirsten R. Hazler et al. (2004) titled "Common, but Commonly Overlooked: Red-bellied Woodpeckers As Songbird Nest Predators," the abstract states:

"Woodpeckers in North America are not widely recognized as nest predators. In this paper, we describe several eyewitness accounts of songbird nest predation by Red-bellied Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes carolinus*), document evidence that songbirds recognize woodpeckers as nest predators, and show that our observations are consistent with previously published notes. We believe that this species, commonly overlooked, may be an important predator of songbird nests in many eastern North American forests."

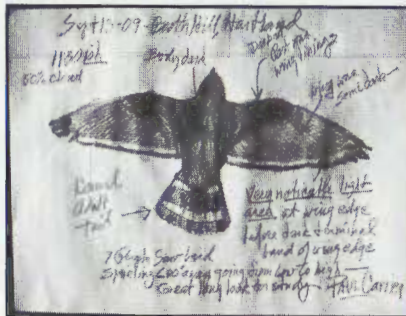
An article in *The Condor* (92:789 for 1990) is titled "Red-bellied Woodpecker Predation On Nestling House Wren." Authors Andrew J. Neill and R. Given Harper cite reports of predation on House Wren, House Sparrow, White-breasted

Nuthatch and Carolina Chickadee, all cavity nesters, as well as one open nesting species, American Redstart. They also note that a Pileated Woodpecker has been documented eating a Red-bellied Woodpecker nestling. They conclude by saying, "Thus Red-bellied Woodpeckers may prey regularly on cavity-nesting species, such as House Wren, and may be responsible for the disappearance of nestlings more frequently than is generally realized."

A Dark Morph Broad-winged Hawk

On Sept. 13, 2009, at 11:30 a.m., at our hawk watch site at Booth Hill in Hartland, we spotted in front of us a dark morph Broad-winged Hawk (a form seldom documented in the East - Ed.). We studied it well and seven people concurred it was a dark morph bird. Four were veteran hawk watchers with two people having seen this form before (Paul Carrier and Jane Low). It was all dark in the under wing linings and some into the flight (feathers). There was a noticeable thin light area just before the terminal black border on the trailing edge of the wing. Tail was a normal adult's. ... The body was also dark. We saw the bird fairly low as it flew just 200 feet in front of us from north to south and about 300 feet up. It then spiraled up about 600 feet to our south above our field, and when it reached about 2,000 feet it flew due west. We all had a fantastic look at this bird and studied it well as it spiraled up and away.

Paul Carrier



Dark morph Broad-winged Hawk - field sketch by Paul Carrier.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Julian Hough

It's late fall when we see a relatively long-necked shorebird swimming. It spins in tight circles, frantically pecking at the water's surface. Behavior alone screams "phalarope." Any of the three species - Red-necked, Red or Wilson's - are noteworthy in Connecticut. Where do we start?

These "spinning tops" of the bird world are the most delicate shorebird visitors to our coasts. Their frantic, clockwork-like feeding action and dazzling plumages make them instantly appealing. Wilson's Phalaropes, unlike their two congeners are non-pelagic birds, favoring inland waters, brackish lagoons and similar areas. Both Red-necked and Red Phalaropes are rare migrants here, but in fall any of the three might occur, especially if displaced by bad weather.

Our bird is either a juvenile or non-breeding adult. The easiest way of ageing any phalarope in non-breeding dress is the upperpart and tertial pattern - uniformly gray in adults and dark-centered in juveniles/first-winters. Our bird has a dark-striped mantle and blackish tertial centers, which make it a juvenile. It has begun its post-juvenile molt into first-basic plumage, evidenced by the newer gray scapular feathers on the upperparts. The bill is rather narrow and pointed but seems to fall short of the needle-like bill of Wilson's. The dark ear covert is well defined and forms a small "bandit" mask. In Wilson's, the ear coverts are dark gray, not black, and continue in a subtle stripe down the neck. So, based on bill shape and head pattern we have eliminated Wilson's. In juvenile



plumage Red-necked and Red Phalaropes are almost identical. They are best separated by Red-necked's smaller size, slightly longer neck and thinner bill. On our bird the bill is longer and thinner than Red Phalarope, and the neck seems longer. Our bird is indeed a molting juvenile Red-necked Phalarope, and using bill shape alone makes identification easy in most cases.

In addition, Red-neckeds are earlier migrants and are more likely to be seen in full juvenile plumage. Red Phalaropes, which tend to occur later in the autumn, are less likely to show such retained dark feathering on the upperparts.

In fall, both Red-necked and Red migrate to the ocean, where they form post-breeding flocks far from land. During migration, both spring and fall, bad weather may force small numbers to be "wrecked" inland or along the coast. This happened in May 2006 when bad spring storms coincided with a northward movement of both species. This resulted in many unseasonable birds in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Both species were found here, but the rarer Red Phalaropes were more notable, especially well-watched females in Hamden and Canton.

This juvenile was photographed by me at Point Reyes, California, in September.



New England, January

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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The Connecticut Warbler (ISSN 1077-0283) is devoted to the study of birds and their conservation in Connecticut and is published quarterly (January, April, July, and October) by the Connecticut Ornithological Association.

Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a computer disk, if possible. Style should follow usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations and photographs are needed and welcome. Line art of Connecticut and regional birds should be submitted as good quality prints or in original form. All submitted materials will be returned. We can use good quality photographs of birds unaccompanied by an article but with caption including species, date, locality, and other pertinent information.

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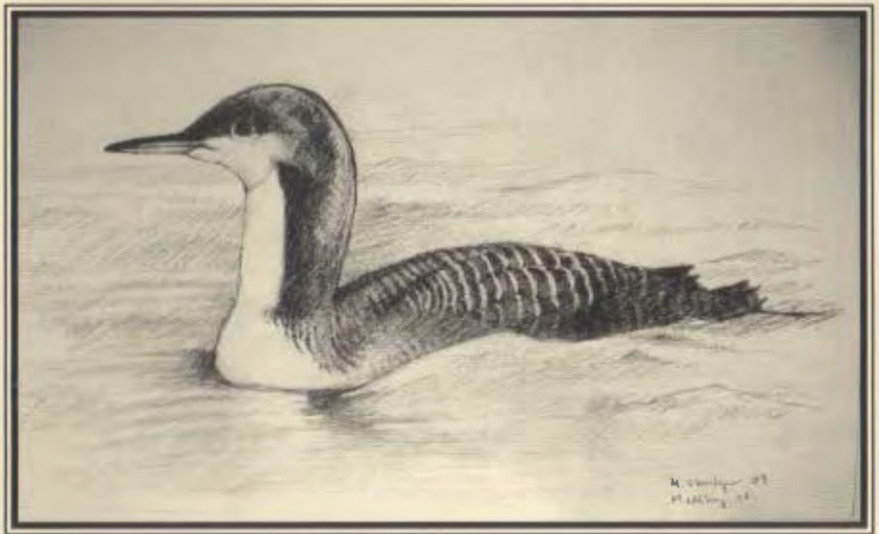
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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



Volume 30 No. 2

April 2010

Pages 37-88

The Connecticut Warbler

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

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ON THE COVER

Pacific Loon

The cooperative Pacific Loon on peaceful Lake Quassa-paug in Middlebury was a star attraction of autumn 2009. It provided the state's first photo documentation for the species and also posed for our cover drawing by Mark Szantyr.

MABEL OSGOOD WRIGHT AWARD

In presenting the award to Joseph Zeranski at the annual meeting on March 20 at Middlesex Community College, COA President Patrick Comins said:

It is my honor to present the 2010 Mable Osgood Wright Award. First off, I'd like to thank Tom Baptist for the text of this presentation. There are few voices in Connecticut as knowledgeable, as committed to the conservation of birds and their habitats, as this year's recipient. He has dedicated in his lifetime an extraordinary amount of time and effort to that cause. And the results of his leadership and work are outstanding.

Perhaps most importantly, he co-authored with Tom Baptist the book "Connecticut Birds," published in 1990 - the first such compendium of the status of bird populations in our state since the seminal work of Sage, Bishop and Bliss in 1913. This effort took seven years to complete and remains important and relevant to this day. In this book, the authors carefully describe the changes in bird habitats and bird populations over time, and focus on the role of humans in effectuating those changes. Joe's training as a historian is clearly manifested in this work. For example, Joe was able to confirm the presence of Heath Hen in Connecticut (now extinct) using factual references to the birds found in historical land records in many communities in the state.

Joe was also a founder of the COA and served four terms on its board of directors, totaling 12 years of leadership and service. He co-authored the by-laws for the organization, helping it through its initial formation, which to this day has operated on solid footing. Joe was a member of the initial Rare Records Committee and helped to establish a scientific and informed approach to chronicle the occurrence of rarities in the state.

Joe was key to the establishment of a network of hawk-watches in Connecticut, beginning in 1970 at Audubon's Quaker Ridge site in Greenwich. He was co-compiler of the Greenwich-Stamford Christmas Bird Count and its Summer Bird Count for many years and has been the statewide compiler for the Summer Bird Count and co-authored the annual summary since 1992. He is a veteran birder and a keen observer of nature. He served on the Conservation Commission in his hometown of Greenwich for 16 years and was a board member and vice president of Greenwich Audubon Society for nearly 20 years.

Joseph D. Zeranski has been an articulate voice for bird conservation for nearly a half century. As such, Joe is a worthy recipient of the Mabel Osgood Wright Award. Please join me in a round of applause to celebrate Joe's many contributions to Connecticut ornithology.

Unfortunately, Joe could not be with us today because of some serious health issues, but he has provided this statement:

"I'm delighted and most appreciative to COA's Board of Directors and the membership for this unexpected and very significant honor. I regret not being with you today, but look forward to continue working in behalf of COA and the Connecticut birding community, and wish you well in your efforts to maintain and expand COA's ornithological programs."

169 ... AND COUNTING

One Connecticut explorer's adventures in town birding from Stonington to Salisbury

By Jamie Meyers

*"Was this all a dream, just a moment in the stream ... and what
will we find in the fields?"*

John Stewart, "The Field Where The Angels Dance" (1999)

Truth be told, COA is partly to blame for this whole thing. It started off with just one innocent look at the Birder's Lists on the COA Web site about a decade ago. In some parts of the country, birders are very serious about county lists, but in a small state like Connecticut, that's largely not the case. Still, I have a fascination with geography – a friend of mine once told me I'm the only person she knows who reads road maps for pleasure – and I decided it would be fun to compile my own county lists and see how they stacked up.

Therein lay the rub, since I first needed to sort Connecticut's 169 towns into their respective counties. Some quick re-search took care of that, and I was off and running. Knowing my obsessive nature, I knew it was a mistake to organize a series of grids for each county with columns for every town, but I did it all the same. That got me more interested in what I was seeing in towns I was passing through on my way to places like Hammonasset, Milford Point and Sherwood Island, and in turn induced me to innocently start recording my sightings in exotic locales such as Ansonia, Bozrah, Harwinton and so on. I understood that I was on a slippery slope when I compiled a list of species I saw or heard while waiting (several times) for the Brambling to show up in Weston. There *has* to be something wrong with anyone who lives 50 miles away in Canton yet keeps a Weston list.

From there, things went downhill fast. It quickly became an appealing idea to visit each of the 169 towns in the state at least once and build a list, however modest, for each one. As

I did so, of course, I was checking off American Crow easily in each of those places, so it was a logical next step to make sure I recorded that one for *every* town in the state. With that achieved, I figured why not build a list of at least 20 species for each town, while also chasing favorite common birds such as American Robin and Northern Cardinal in my travels. Then, inspired in no small part by my friend Denny Abbott's amazing quest to record 2,000 state "ticks" in all six New England states combined, I decided to try to get 5,000 town "ticks" for Connecticut's 169 towns combined.

Surely, you can see where this is going.

As of this writing, ten years and probably a hundred thousand car miles later, I have amassed a cumulative town tally of over 18,000 ticks, have seen or heard at least 84 species in *each* town, and have recorded 47 species in each of Connecticut's 169 towns. From Greenwich to Thompson, Stonington to Salisbury, that's a lot of birds and a lot of time. Though the numbers are impressive, the true story to me is what they represent. The checkmarks on my grids tell a tale of roads

The 169 Club: Charter Members --

1. *American Crow*
2. *Red-winged Blackbird*
3. *Northern Cardinal*
4. *Gray Catbird*
5. *Black-capped Chickadee*



Northern Cardinal

traveled, avian stones unturned and discoveries made. They are the story of birding life lived well – and the unchecked boxes speak of adventures and possibilities yet to come.

One of the true beauties of this project is that Connecticut is such a small state that I am never more than a 90-minute drive away from any location from my home town of Canton. While a part of the sprawling northeast megalopolis, there are enough natural remnants in every town in this state to allow for birding challenges that range from cerebral to sublime to borderline absurd.

A quick reading of the CTBirds listserv suggests that the majority of birders in the state concentrate on a fairly small number of hotspots. While this is not a bad strategy – I did it myself for a number of years – as I have grown and developed as a birder I've taken delight in walking new trails and discovering little-known birding gems in quiet, out of the way places that seldom show up on the statewide birding radar. I have enjoyed many productive birding days driving vvvveerrrrrryyy slowly down quiet roads in new places, armed with just a Rand McNally town atlas (an essential tool in this game) and a pair of open eyes and ears, soaking up my surroundings and exploring any inviting trail, power line cut or waterway that I might encounter. Learning the towns of Connecticut in this way has been especially rewarding, particularly when returning to the same locations at different times of the year to see how the changing seasons have affected the bird life there. A fun challenge is exploring a place in one season and trying to figure out what species might be there at another. My roadmaps are dotted with cryptic written notes such as "woodcock?" or "check in spring". Maybe it's an ego thing, but there's no bigger birding kick than finding a peenting woodcock or hitting a nice pocket of spring songbirds in full burst in places that looked promising when I visited them in chillier seasons.

As suggested above, the town birding project really morphed into a double-pronged assault. At first, it was pretty much a ticking exercise and a nice excuse to satisfy my wander-

The 169 Club: Most Recent Additions --

- 47. *Carolina Wren*
- 46. *Great Blue Heron*
- 45. *Cedar Waxwing*
- 44. *Scarlet Tanager*
- 43. *Eastern Kingbird*

*Cedar Waxwing*

ing spirit, but later it became just as much a quest to find certain species in each town. Many of the 47 species in my "169 Club" are obvious ones – crows, robins, Blue Jays, etc. But the list does include some that didn't seem likely as candidates to me at first blush. For instance, until I actually made the effort, I didn't expect to be able to find Swamp Sparrows everywhere, given that some towns really have no quality swamps and limited brushy habitat. With experience, though, I found that once I learned this species' sharp chip note and started searching during peak migration time in early October, "Swampies" were actually quite easy to locate, even in marginal locations. Most people realize that it's greatly rewarding to find a bird in a place that just looks good for it – it's the difference between "birding" and "bird watching," really. Likewise, I always knew that Ruby-crowned Kinglets were common, but didn't understand how much so until I started actively seeking them out. Long-time birders will appreciate that Red-bellied Woodpecker is on

this list – pretty noteworthy, as this species was scarce in the state until the late 1980s.

On the other side of the coin, I still need Rock Pigeon in 17 towns, and don't expect I will ever get that one in all 169. This species thrives in areas of with heavy human habitation in particular, and farmland to a lesser extent, and has proven unexpectedly difficult to find in towns with heavy woodlands and not much industrial development. Northern Mockingbirds have similarly been challenging to locate in some heavily forested northeastern and northwestern locales.

The quest for certain species in all towns in the state has led to some amusing absurdities. For the past two years my Warbling Vireo tally has been stuck on a tantalizing 168 towns, with Hartland the only blemish. I have taken at least a dozen trips there now in search of that thorn in my side, and I can feel my blood pressure rising somewhat even as I ponder it now. Frustratingly, I have more than once located a singing male no more than a hundred yards south of the town line in neighboring Barkhamsted. Perhaps this is bad karma coming back to me for something I did in another life. At this point I am so eager (obsessed?) to close the deal on this species that I have pondered strapping a couple of speakers on top of my car like they did in "The Blues Brothers" movie and driving along the Farmington River broadcasting Warbling Vireo breeding songs in order to attract one! One more year of near misses and it may just come to that. Joking aside, I'll find one sooner or later, and when that happens it will be akin to winning the Super Bowl for me.

Similarly, I have needed Turkey Vulture for several years now only in Stamford and Darien. Local birders probably see that common species there all the time, but TVs just seem to clear out of town on the odd occasions when I come to visit. This absurdity most assuredly occupies more space in my birding brain than it needs to - and will continue to until the job is done. Such is the pull of this compulsion.

I should point out that in order to be eligible for possible

inclusion in the 169 Club, any species must first pass the "Windsor Locks test". I grew up there, so I can make fun of the place a bit. Yet I know it has not in my lifetime been blessed with an abundance of decent habitat for much more than House Sparrows and Rock Pigeons, so I figure that if I can find a certain species there, I can find it anywhere in the state. I don't think it's a coincidence that I didn't take up birding until I moved away.

Covering Connecticut at the town level has allowed me to see the state I've called home for four-plus decades in a different light. Most birders who don't live in or near Madison likely seldom bird that busy shoreline town outside of Hammonasset Beach State Park. This location, arguably the best birding site in the state, has been instrumental in helping me compile a personal state-best list of 215 species, but my favorite Madison birding experience came miles from the park on one

The 169 Club: Some Elusive Nesters

Least Bittern -- 1 town

Mississippi Kite -- 1

Boat-tailed Grackle -- 2

Barn Owl -- 2

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron -- 4

Piping Plover -- 5



Least Bittern

crisp spring morning in May. Some birders likely know there is a wonderful set of woodlands in the northern part of the town that have an almost Canadian feel to them. It was pure magic driving along a little-traveled road in these woods just before sunup at peak migration and hearing species such as Hermit Thrush, White-throated Sparrow and even Ruffed Grouse, as well as a myriad of wood warblers greeting the day with their songs. Perhaps that was a fluke and I just hit a really great fallout, or maybe it's always like that there, but the memory is indelibly stamped in my mind. I would have missed this wonderful experience had I chosen to bird along the beaten path that morning – and had I not needed Oven-bird for my Madison list at the time.

The grids tell me where I need the most birds and where my target ticks lie. While I follow their lead, I definitely look forward to birding in some towns more than others. Birding the

The 169 Club: Almost There

Warbling Vireo -- 168 towns

Turkey Vulture -- 167

Northern Mockingbird -- 160

Eastern Towhee -- 155

Rock Pigeon -- 152



Turkey Vulture

eastern counties of Tolland, Windham and New London has been particularly revelatory, since I was not much familiar with those places at the start of this game. Apart from a few places along the immediate coast, these counties are generally little visited by birders. Still, there are some true treasures in eastern Connecticut that I surely would have overlooked in my travels if not for this project. While the northwest hills offer more diverse habitats, particularly for water-loving species, and the towns are undeniably more charming, Connecticut's own Northeast Kingdom is not without its own birdy pleasures, especially in spring. Rolling, picturesque farmland and dense mixed woodlands dominate the landscape, and the towns themselves are pleasant and generally uncongested.

Some birders know Horsebarn Hill and Lot W at UConn, Mansfield Hollow State Park and the nearby Windham Airport as good birding spots, but they just scratch the surface. Many enjoyable and relaxing sojourns are possible in little-birded places such as the Hampton Reservoir and its environs, or the vast stretch of woodlands in the Natchaug State Forest system. The Quinebaug Fish Hatchery in Plainfield is more than a bit off the beaten path, but it can be a fantastic birding spot, especially in winter when birds are attracted to the heated (and thus always ice-free) exit pools behind the hatchery building. In warmer months, the adjacent woods provide great walking – and an opportunity to build a nice bird list. I have a particular affection for Bear Hill WMA in Bozrah (where the heck is Bozrah, I would have asked a few years ago). A walk there is always time well spent, be it in the brushy fields that are often teeming with sparrows, Indigo Buntings and possibly much rarer fare, or the nice wooded trails which have allowed me to tick not only the expected nesters, but also goodies such as cuckoos and even Gray-cheeked Thrush in season. While far from common anywhere (and my cumulative town lists reflect this), I've noticed that eastern Connecticut is somewhat better for cuckoos than anywhere else, likely due to the fact that Tent Caterpillar nests aren't as likely to be immediately destroyed

there. Go figure. While some eastern towns are not particularly diverse in terms of habitat – can anyone tell me where the heck I can find ducks in Scotland or Canterbury without getting shot for trespassing? – I’m seldom disappointed with a day of birding east of the river.

Of course, there are places in the state that offer their own challenges in terms of building town lists. For years, my grids have consistently told me that many of my neediest towns are in New Haven and Fairfield counties, especially in the “All-American Valley” along the Route 8 corridor in New Haven County and the heavily traveled serpentine highways and byways of upper Fairfield County. Henry David Thoreau once proposed that each town set aside 500 to 1,000 acres of land for conservation, and there have been many times while struggling to find species that are common elsewhere when I’ve found myself wishing that some of those towns had taken that sage advice. Continued development of the already diminished natural landscape is a fact of life in some places, and casts increased importance on the places that remain. Some town lists I have would be greatly lessened if not for the presence of one or two critical places, such as the Ansonia Nature Center and the Osbornedale State Park in Derby, and that is a scary reality. The twenty bucks I spend each year on a Regional Water Authority pass allowing me access to nine quiet and wooded properties in the greater New Haven area has proven to be money well spent, not only for my lists but also for my birding in general. Anyone can find a Black-throated Blue Warbler in the lush northwest hills, where they are fairly common breeders, but try finding one in West Haven. That is not as easy a task – and so more appreciated when it happens.

One fun thing about this game is that it sometimes throws curveballs and produces opportunities that just need to be seized. Birders will remember well the amazing Pine Siskin invasion of 2008-09. I have an old checklist from Halloween 2008 that shows I had found this species in 16 towns over the course of nearly nine years of town birding. By the time the Christmas Counts and Big January were complete, though,

it was obvious that these erratic little finches were everywhere in the state. A unique challenge thus presented itself – in how many towns could I tick siskins before they disappeared?

As I rode like General Sherman through, well, the town of Sherman and into the southlands of the state, adding siskins to literally two dozen Fairfield and New Haven county town lists on a Saturday, then doing it again in Windham and Tolland counties the following day, I fully understood the opportunity. Suddenly the dreary months of February and March became alive with the chase. I crisscrossed the state

The 169 Club: Some Favorite Finds

- Red Phalarope - Canton*
- Yellow-breasted Chat -- Montville*
- White-winged Crossbill -- Columbia*
- Bonaparte's Gull -- Salisbury*
- Sanderling -- Colebrook*
- Cerulean Warbler -- North Stonington*
- Upland Sandpiper -- New Hartford*
- Short-billed Dowitcher -- Bloomfield*
- Olive-sided Flycatcher -- Monroe*
- Cape May Warbler -- New London*



Yellow-breasted Chat

on every available day in search of siskins, which obliged by being numerous and noisy. It only took about ten minutes to find one even in Windsor Locks. But as cruel fate would have it, the species proved to be similarly easy to find in every town – except one! Bridgeport. Argggghh! I made several passes through places where I thought I might kick one up, but the birding gods said no dice. Nervously I fussed and fretted for two weeks, checking satellite maps on Yahoo! in a vain hope that I'd overlooked a good location, rechecking my own maps, and reviewing the daily reports in hopes that some local birder would provide a lead, but none came. What to do? Merely being stopped abruptly one town short in this quest simply would not do. But it was not totally up to me – the birds had to be there in order for me to find them!

Finally, on my third pass of the day through a coniferous section of Beardsley Park, I heard a distant but distinctly siskin-like vocalization through the open sunroof of my slowly moving car. I threw my car to the shoulder and jumped out, frightening a couple innocent passers-by (sorry, folks!) and looked up just in time to see two siskins flying toward the zoo. SCORE! I wouldn't have been happier if a Black Rosy-Finch had landed next to me.

A little victory, perhaps. But it was golden to me.

A day with opportunities well-seized and a flexible schedule can be especially satisfying. Early last November, I had a day off and decided to do some birding in a few eastern towns that are so out of the way that even some of the people who live there aren't sure where they are. Being early November, a quick check of a couple larger lakes was in order. Each of the first several I checked held a local goodie – some Black Scoters here, a Long-tailed Duck or a Red-necked Grebe (or two) there. Suddenly, a casual Monday drive turned into a memorable day of waterfowl chasing, as I raced from lake to lake in an effort to fill in some difficult boxes on my check-lists. I've come to live for days like that, and I've found that the more often I'm in the field, the more of those days I enjoy. Imagine that!

In effect, of course, this is an exercise in listing, at an extreme micro level. Listing can be a topic of some controversy for birders. Some birders I know keep no lists at all, while others are so singularly driven by their desire to build robust lists that they'll all but run over their siblings to get that next checkmark. Perhaps it's fortunate I'm an only child. Yet, despite building and keeping a plethora of intricately color-coded grids with complicated formulae telling me where I should go next to maximize my ticking, if this were simply about listing I'd have moved on long ago. The sum total of "this town bird thing" is really a series of mini-adventures, taken at random intervals with an arbitrary but convenient political entity (the state of Connecticut) as my playing field. It is a spirit quest with wings, and the lists are merely conduits into that world, guideposts along the way. Perhaps the finest value this project has brought to my life is that it's given me an impetus to get up and explore the world, sometimes on days when I've needed that extra push, and definitely into places I would have not have ventured otherwise. I have been fortunate indeed for the opportunity.

So, you might ask – what's next? Even though I've said this before, things are winding down a bit. I reached what I consider to be my final absolute goal during this past winter when I tallied a Carolina Wren in Woodstock for my 18,000th cumulative town tick. Some have suggested pushing to 20,000, but that's not as easy as it sounds. On a good day at a peak time I might hope for maybe a dozen new town birds, even running a well-planned route. Painful gas prices are an incentive to remain closer to home. Still though, there is and will always be unfinished business. Repeated visits to places I've discovered along the way are like reconnecting with old friends - and who knows what will be sitting in that next field, waiting to be discovered? The agony and the ecstasy of an effort like this is that it never truly ends. Great moments are possible in this game at any moment, and the next town bird is just down the road....

Photo credits: Northern Cardinal by Mark Szantyr; Cedar Waxwing by Mark Szantyr; Least Bittern by Tom Sayers; Turkey Vulture by Julian Hough; Yellow-breasted Chat by Hank Golet.

BOOKS ON BIRDS

By Alan Brush

The Bird: A Natural History of Who Birds Are, Where They Came From, and How They Live. by Colin Tudge. 2008. xvi+462. Crown Publishers, NY. Illustrations by Jane Milloy.

Those of us who are involved with birds for making our living and who also enjoy birding are a privileged lot. It is a life that is a rich combination of scientific curiosity, intellectual involvement, and physical enjoyment. In "The Bird" Colin Tudge, a successful science writer, couples a life-long interest in birds with his contemporary views of basic avian biology and evolution in a most charming fashion. The result is a very readable account of ornithology told in a stimulating, timely context.

Tudge approaches the biology of birds in "A Different Way of Being" with a discussion of what it takes to be a flyer. This provides the framework for the entire book and it is a good start. Everything birds are and do centers on their ability to fly. Ironically, how flight evolved is still unresolved and a subject of intense study. Flight, of course, is inextricably associated with feathers. Understanding of the evolution of feathers has recently undergone a major revolution. Tudge brings this all together along with such factors as the highly developed avian cerebellum (the part of the brain associated with flight and complex behavioral displays) as fundamental in avian evolution. In "How Birds Became," Tudge recounts the amazing stories of Archaeopteryx, China's "feathered dinosaurs," the perpetually tantalizing fossil record, the potential power of phylogenetic analysis, and the current arguments over the origins of modern birds. Along with the BAD (birds are dinosaurs), BAND (birds are not dinosaurs) and BCF (birds came first) schools, it is a tale well told.

Bird behavior, in all its complexities and variety, is introduced by posing the larger question "what is the mind of birds like?" Rather than construct arguments from a series of

descriptive studies (which are covered elsewhere) he invokes behaviorism, instinct, reflex (illustrated by Skinner boxes), and other "-isms" that provide insights into how the bird brain is organized, how it appears to work, and what might be necessary to measure and understand abstract behaviors such as planning or tool making, emotions, perceptions and cognition. With specific examples to illustrate the scope of avian capabilities, Tudge integrates many of these arguments in the chapter on "Idyll and Mayhem: The Sex Life of Birds." One point taken here is how much of what we think we know about bird behavior is untested. Critical studies in these areas are always needed and will likely always be wanting "...because there is not enough time left in the universe to do all the critical studies that might in principle be done."

Tudge's treatment of the "Birds of the World" is excellent. Birds of the world, their taxonomic and biogeographic diversity, is mandatory content in every ornithology text. His presentation is infused with the new and current thinking on avian phylogeny. There are puzzles aplenty (and they may all not be resolved through DNA) and the treatment is fair and balanced. Because relationships have been a topic of concern since science's earliest days, and so much is known already, treatment at the ordinal level is thorough. Beside the scientific questions, this work bears on the current debates over how field guides might be best organized: taxonomic sequence or ecological grouping.

This is not so true for migration, which remains a major puzzle. Migration involves huge numbers of birds. Tudge indicates five billion individuals in Northern Europe and Asia fly south annually, and an equal number move in North America. Seasonal movements of species on the southern continents also occur, but in smaller numbers. In the northern hemisphere some birds fly amazing distances that require accurate navigation skills and incredible endurance. Tudge walks the reader through the magnitude of the problems, gives excellent examples (Arctic Tern, Bar-headed Goose, etc), but becomes sketchy on its control and evolution. This

is not surprising as migration is devilishly difficult to study. Even with the recent advances in technology (e.g., satellite tracking devices), we have only the faintest ideas on genetics or evolution of even the most elemental aspects.

Among other skills, migration involves a sense of timing and clues to changing day length. In addition to the internal and external factors that initiate the behavior, there must be mechanisms that determine proper direction, some sense of an appropriate destination, and systems that control the physiological and metabolic changes in support of the behavior. The demands on the species are numerous and over time must have been linked to climatic and physiographic changes. How this is incorporated into the genes and expressed through the genome is a mystery indeed. As in other chapters, this is not simply a sterile textbook summary of what we know, but meant to deal with what are often referred to as larger questions and how problems got into that category. This is both informational and refreshing. It invites the reader to think and I can conceive of no greater recommendation for a book.

The book's final section explores the relationships between man and birds. Tudge deals with species extinction, both historical and recent. He makes the point that it is not the absolute number of individuals in a threatened species but the rate of decline and the failure to correct the underlying cause. But he also gives examples of species that have increased in number, showing that birds and people can often live together. "The Epilogue: A Matter of Attitude," allows Tudge to expound on his personal thinking of the seemingly insurmountable problems of the relationships between humans and the environment. His views on the philosophical and theoretical views of natural history that have been instrumental in our thinking since the middle of the 19th Century are unveiled. It is done carefully, and is especially relevant to thinking about conservation. He is not preachy, but develops a timely and appropriate statement regarding his feelings and thinking about the environment we share with birds.

2009 FALL HAWK MIGRATION

By Neil Currie

In mid-August and early September small numbers of migrating hawks and eagles begin to filter through Connecticut. At Lighthouse Point in New Haven (Table 3) on Aug. 11, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, an American Kestrel and three Merlins were the first migrants. At Quaker Ridge in Greenwich (Table 4), Aug. 20, when four hawks passed, was the first day of a full season of daily counts. Then on Aug. 24 four Bald Eagles, the first of a Quaker Ridge year-record 176, passed the lookout. By mid-September and throughout October the flight of hawks became heavy, and by November most hawks were gone.

At inland sites in September Broad-winged Hawks, on their way to Texas and beyond into South America, are the most numerous migrants. As early as Sept. 2 and 3 at a few inland sites, eager hawk watchers were on hand, but they saw few hawks. The bulk of the Broadwing flight (Table 2) generally takes place on three or four days in mid September, and this was so during the fall of 2009. Passing in large flocks (hawk watchers call them kettles), which may contain several hundred hawks, Broadwings make up about 90 percent of the inland migrants. Additional species, in small numbers, are Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, Ospreys, Bald Eagles, American Kestrels and others (Table 1). With the Broadwings gone the others, scattered across the state, are still migrating into November.

Table 1 contains the fall migration counts of 17 established sites and three other locations where observers submitted single-day reports. The four tables included with this report can also be found on the Connecticut Ornithological Association's Web site, www.ctbirding.org. Also during the fall, most sites report counts daily to the Hawk Migration Association of North America (HMANA) Web site, www.HawkCount.org. The reports to HawkCount contain more detail (weather in-

formation, and hourly and daily counts) than the others. Also HawkCount contains reports from most North American and Central American sites.

The organized effort to watch and count migrating hawks over Connecticut will enter its 40th year next fall. With so many sites recording hawks for so many years, a few records have been broken almost every year. In 2009 watchers spent a record 2650 hours at Connecticut lookouts, counting over 58,000 hawks (not a record). Statewide records (Table 1) in 2009 were 125 Black Vultures, two Mississippi Kites, 527 Bald Eagles, 688 Red-shouldered Hawks and 232 Peregrine Falcons. The Black Vulture record reflects the steady year to year increase in their numbers in the state. Mississippi Kites have been recorded in Connecticut before, but these two, an adult and an immature, on Oct. 14 at Quaker Ridge, were the first reported fall migrants. Appearing each fall in increasing numbers, Bald Eagle and Peregrine numbers are a success story.

In addition to state records, there were individual site records. At Quaker Ridge, 176 Bald Eagles and 150 Merlins were record counts. Six Black Vultures were a record at Lighthouse Point, and the 150 Bald Eagles seen there was second only to the 2008 record of 155. As I write this, on the COA listserv, CTBirds, birders are noting an apparent decrease in the number of Connecticut's wintering Great Cormorants. One possible explanation is that the increased population of Bald Eagles has added young Great Cormorants to their diet in northern New England breeding areas.

Every fall in Connecticut there are a few big days, days when a thousand or more hawks pass a single site. This year there were 13 of these. On Sept. 15 at five inland sites and one coastal site there were big days that helped to produce a statewide count of 10,765 Broad-winged Hawks (Table 2). On Sept. 14, 15 and 19, with inland hawks funneling to the southwest, there were big days at Quaker Ridge (Table 2) with a total of 7933 hawks passing. During that period, large numbers of Broadwings were on the move throughout the

East. On Sept. 16-17 at Hawk Mountain, near Allentown, Pa., 2918 of them passed down the Kittatinny Ridge. And from Sept. 14 through 20 at Hook Mountain on the Hudson River near Nyack, N.Y.; at Montclair Quarry in Montclair, N.J.; and at Mount Peter in Warwick, N.Y., there were eight big days with over 12,000 Broadwings recorded. At Lighthouse Point there were two big days: Sept. 25 – 2835 hawks, and Oct. 8 – 1094 hawks. At Booth Memorial Park in Stratford, a new lookout added to the coastal group, Sept. 25 was a big day with 1363 Broadwings and a total of 1500 hawks passing the lookout.

The fall of 2009 produced another great hawk migration season. Although the number of hawks migrating over Connecticut is far smaller than in other parts of North America (such as the Great Lakes region and Texas), Connecticut's fall flight is one of nature's great spectacles. Along with watching and counting hawks, birders have taken to counting and recording other migrating birds. These provide as much excitement as the hawks. One example: on Oct. 29 a group of five Sandhill Cranes, previously sighted in Wareham, Mass., crossed over Quaker Ridge and were later reported passing over the Scott's Mountain hawk watch on the New Jersey-Pennsylvania border.

Thanks to all the lead counters at Connecticut's watch sites. Thanks to Luke Tiller at Quaker Ridge and Steve Mayo at Lighthouse Point for their comments during the fall that contributed to this report. In addition to these leaders, the following birders took part in the 2009 fall hawk watches:

Lois Aldi, Ralph Amodei, Mike Ayrelia, Renee Baade, David Babington, Bill Banks, Tom Baptist, Charlie Barnard, Marty Barris, Dan Barvir, Steve Beach, Steve Beal, Ray Belding, Ron Bell, Debbie Bishop, Nick Bonomo, Gregg and Carter Brents, Polly Brody, Tom Burke, Dana Campbell, Paul Carrier, Patti Clarke, Al Collins, Annette Cunniffe, Neil Currie, Sally Davis, Ayreslea Denny, Paul Desjardins, Angela Dimmitt, Randy Domina, Jim Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Dick English, Dottie Evans, John Eykelhoff, Larry Fischer, Larry Flynn and

Carrie Folsom-O'Keeffe.

Steve Foisey, Barry Freed, Frank Gallo, Carol Goertz, Jeff Greenwood, Joyce and Norbert Grohoski, Frank Guida, Tony Hager, Greg Hanisek, Art Hankey, Jano Hankey, Dennis Hannon, John Hannon, Tom Hanrahan, Carol Harmon, James Harmon, Roy Harvey, Orlando and Victoria Hidalgo, Julian Hough, Darin Jacklin, Lynn James, Elsbeth Johnson, Roger Johnson, Jim Kandefer, Anne Kehmna, Paul Kennedy, Sulmann Khan, Scott Kruitbosch, Bob Lambert, Gary Lemon, Jane Low, Lisa Lozier, Ryan MacLean, Frank Mantlik, Jerry Marcellina, Hugh Martin, Stafan Martin, Steve Mayo and Donna McLean.










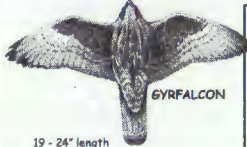
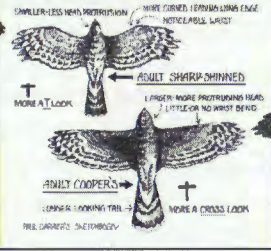


Robin McAllister, Ken Merman, Ken Merrifield, Judy Moore, Marty Moore, Don Morgan, Russ Naylor, Gina Nichols, Allison and Brian O'Toole, Gary Palmer, Ron Pelletier, Janet Petricone, Matt Popp, Mike Reese, Gail Roberts, Alisa Rosenberg, Paul Roberts, Arne Rosengren, Dave Rosgen, David Salmon, Meredith Sampson, Sal Satin, John Shugrue, Donna Rose Smith, Penny Solum, Bob Stanowski, Dori Sosensky, Maria Stockmal, Mark Szantyr, Luke Tiller, Carol Titus, Tony Tortora, Ben Van Doren, Dennis Varza, Mike Warner, Brian Webster, Leigh Wells, Winston Williams, Joe Zeranski and Jim Zipp.

A GUIDE TO HAWKS SEEN IN THE NORTH AMERICA

These are migrants seen in most of North America. Because many species differ in appearance due to age and various light and dark morphs, especially in the west, only the adult of the most common form is illustrated.

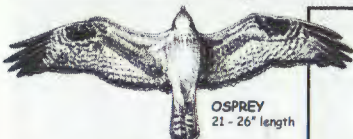
KNOW YOUR SILHOUETTES

		
<p>FALCONS Streamlined - long, pointed wings; long, tapered tail; strong rowing wing beats; wings look less pointed and tail less tapered when not in direct flight.</p>	<p>ACCIPITERS Short, wide, rounded wings; long tail; flap-flap-flap-glide flight.</p>	<p>BUTEOS Broad wings and broad rounded tail; often seen soaring in wide circles high in the air.</p>

 <p>PEREGRINE FALCON 14 - 18" length • Light breast and throat. • Crow size. • Quick, powerful wingbeats.</p>	 <p>NORTHERN GOSHAWK 18 - 24" length • Pale underbody; gray upperparts. • Prominent white undertail coverts. • Heavy body; larger than crow.</p>	 <p>RED-TAILED HAWK 17 - 22" length • Unmarked light-to-red tail; 9 morphs. • Light breast; variably streaked belly band. • Dark leading edge to wing; shallow dihedral.</p>
 <p>MERLIN 9 - 12" length • Banded tail. • Dark; heavily streaked underneath. • Fast, direct flight.</p>	 <p>COOPER'S HAWK 14 - 19" length • Rusty underparts. • Round-tipped, long tail. • Near size of crow; stiff wing beats.</p>	 <p>RED-SHOULDERED HAWK 15 - 18" length • Black tail with narrow, white bands. • Dark wing linings. • Crescent "windows" near tip of wing.</p>
 <p>AMERICAN ♀ KESTREL 8 - 11" length • Light underneath; size of jay; buoyant flight. • Tail: rufous - male; reddish, barred brown - female. • Wings above: blue-male; barred brown-female.</p>	 <p>SHARP-SHINNED HAWK 9 - 13" length • Rusty underparts. • Square or notched tail tip. • Near size of jay; floppy wing beats.</p>	 <p>BROAD-WINGED HAWK 13 - 17" length • Smallest buteo; crow size. • Short tail with equal black and white bands. • Whitish underwings with dark trailing edge.</p>
 <p>GYRFALCON 19 - 24" length • Robust body; larger than Peregrine. • 3 color morphs. • Rare Arctic visitor.</p>	<p>SHARP-SHINNED vs COOPER'S</p>  <p>SMALLER-LESS NOSE PROTRUDING LARGER-NOSE PROTRUDING BEYOND MORE CORNERS, TERMINAL LONG EDGE, NOTICEABLE LINDST ADULT SHARP-SHINNED ADULT COOPER'S MORE AT LOCK LITTLE OR NO WRIST BEND LARGER-LOOKING TAIL MORE A CROSS LOCK PRE-CHARACTERISTICALLY</p>	 <p>ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK ♀ 18 - 23" length • Dark belly (most); dark wrists; strong dihedral (V). • Tail white; 1 or more dark subterminal bands. • Dark morphs: dark body and wing linings.</p>
<p>NOTE: Some hawks soar and glide with their wings held raised above the horizontal, called a dihedral (V)</p>	 <p>SWAINSON'S HAWK 17 - 22" length • Dark breast and flight feathers. • White belly and wing linings; 3 morphs. • Soars with strong dihedral.</p>	

A guide to eastern hawks - These illustrations comprise a guide created by COA member Paul Carrier of Harwinton, an accomplished artist who has often done cover work for The Connecticut Warbler, with editorial assistance by Paul Roberts of Massachusetts. Paul has donated the work to the Hawk Migration Association of North America. It is available laminated for field use or online. Proceeds benefit the organization. For information visit www.hmana.org.


REGIONAL SPECIALTIES



OSPREY
21 - 26" length


- Eagle sized; clean white body.
- Black wrist marks.
- Glides with kink (M) in long, narrow wings.

WESTERN




MISSISSIPPI KITE
13 - 15" length

- Long pointed wings; slim body.
- Light body; dark wings; narrow black tail.
- Bouyant, acrobatic flight.



FERRUGINOUS HAWK
20 - 26" length


- Largest buteo; eagle-like.
- Pale below with dark leggings.
- Mostly white tail; 3 color morphs.



NORTHERN HARRIER
16 - 20" length

Not to scale


- Long, narrow wings and tail; sharp dihedral.
- Browns above, streaked brown below - female.
- Gray above, pale below with black wing tips - male.



PRAIRIE FALCON
14 - 18" length

- Size of Peregrine; much paler plumage.
- Narrow moustache; spotted breast; long tail.
- Dark ampits and partial wing linings.


WING PROFILE




BALD EAGLE

GOLDEN EAGLE

IMMATURE BALD EAGLE




- Immature birds vary greatly in the amount of white spotting on body and wings.
- White showing on wing linings is surely a Bald Eagle.



GOLDEN EAGLE
27 to 35" length


- Like large buteo, curvy wings.
- Head protrudes much less than tail.
- Slight dihedral to wing profile.

NOTE: Some hawks soar and glide with their wings raised above the horizontal, called a dihedral.




BALD EAGLE
27 to 35" length

- Head and tail length similar.
- Long, flat wings.
- Straight leading edge to wings.



TURKEY VULTURE
24 to 28" length

- Dark wing linings with light flight feathers.
- Small head; long tail; sharp dihedral.



BLACK VULTURE
23 to 28" length

- Small head; shorter wings and tail than TV.
- White primary patches; wings held flat; stiff wing beats.

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The handy two-sided guide illustrates all of the regularly occurring species of raptors seen at autumn hawk watches in Connecticut. It also includes rare species normally seen in the West or South. The detailed drawings show the birds from below, as they're most often seen during migration.

The Connecticut Warbler, Vol. 30 No.2, April 2010

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2009

Site		Hours	BV	TV	OS	MK	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW
INLAND GROUP													
Booth Hill	W. Hartland	11			7		3	2	19	2			1034
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater	79			62		12	3	131	12		1	4028
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	54			26		14	1	60	7	1		4312
Flat Hill	Southbury	26	10		3		2	1	7		1		1570
Flirt Hill	Easton	56			6		2	13	44	12		5	7
Good Hill	Woodbury	17	4		14				8	3		1	701
Johnnycake	Burlington	32			13		10		69	4			2494
Middle School	Torrington	66	8		23		6	3	38	13	1	5	1365
Oxford Airport	Oxford	12			6		1		9				1830
Poquonock	Windsor Locks	882	48	203	36		65	27	135	34	7	40	951
Rimmon Ridge	Beacon Falls		5						7	1			650
Taine Mountain	Burlington	7		1	2				8				314
White Memorial	Litchfield	57	17		40		21	2	36	17	2		1167
	Inland Total	1299	92	204	238		136	52	571	105	12	52	20423

COASTAL GROUP		Hours											
Booth Memorial	Stratford	100	2	306	125		51	27	963	208	4	50	2239
East Shore Park	New Haven	5		8	1			3	178	15			197
Hammonasset	Madison	3					1	7	38	12		2	8
Lighthouse	New Haven	597	6	314	963		150	330	5322	1227	7	232	1652
	Orange				15		1		44				38
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich	612	25	1131	607	2	176	169	3254	411	3	352	9866
Waveny Park	New Canaan	33			28		12		41	6			1089
	Coastal Total	1350	33	1759	1739	2	391	536	9840	1879	14	636	15089
2009	Grand Total	2649	125	1963	1977	2	527	588	10411	1984	26	688	35512
		Hours	BV	TV	OS	MK	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW
Lighthouse Point		597	6	314	963	0	150	330	5322	1227	7	232	1652
Quaker Ridge		612	25	1131	607	2	176	169	3254	411	3	352	9866
All Other Sites		1440	94	518	407	0	201	89	1835	346	16	104	23994
Total		2649	125	1963	1977	2	527	588	10411	1984	26	688	35512

Connecticut - All Lookouts - Fall 2009

Site		Hours	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UR		TOTAL
INLAND GROUP												
Booth Hill	W. Hartland	11					2	1	1			1071
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater	79		1			25	4		31		4310
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	54					6		1	10		4438
Flat Hill	Southbury	26					4			5		1603
Flirt Hill	Easton	56		20		1	122	4	2			238
Good Hill	Woodbury	17		2			5					738
Johnnycake	Burlington	32					21	3	1			2615
Middle School	Torrington	66		4			9	4		20		1499
Oxford Airport	Oxford	12		44								1890
Poquonock	Windsor Locks	882	1	155	3	8	43	21	22	46		1845
Rimmon Ridge	Beacon Falls			3			2					668
Taine Mountain	Burlington	7				1						326
White Memorial	Litchfield	57					3	1	1	17		1324
	Inland Total	1299	1	229	3	10	242	38	28	129		22565

COASTAL GROUP		Hours										
Booth Memorial	Stratford	100		76		3	151	19	18	99		4341
East Shore Park	New Haven	5		2			6		2			412
Hammonasset	Madison	3		1			26	16	2			113
Lighthouse	New Haven	597		579	1	9	1311	343	145	305	12896	12896
	Orange						4					102
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich	612		213		11	536	150	33	107		17046
Waveny Park	New Canaan	33		1			20	4	4	11		1216
	Coastal Total	1350		872	1	23	2054	532	204	522		36126
2009	Grand Total	2649	1	1101	4	33	2296	570	232	651		58691
		Hours	SW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UR		TOTAL
Lighthouse Point		597	0	579	1	9	1311	343	145	305		12896
Quaker Ridge		612	0	213		11	536	150	33	107		17046
All Other Sites		1440	1	309	3	13	449	77	54	239		28749
Total		2649	1	1101	4	33	2296	570	232	651		58691

Broad-winged HawkFlights - Fall 2009

September

Site	Town	Hours	-12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21-23	24	25	26	Total
INLAND GROUP																
Booth Hill	West Hartland	17		1008							26					1034
Botsford Hill	Bridgewater	79	9	160	254	1587	527	1	294	862	36	36	252	10		4028
Chestnut Hill	Litchfield	54	7	1033	222	1191	18	1110	285	209	237					4312
Flat Hill	Southbury	26		44	30	1273	223	0		0						1570
Flirt Hill	Easton	56										7				7
Good Hill	Woodbury	17		598	103											701
Johnnycake Mount.	Burlington	32			223	1084	177	2	283	610				115		2494
Middle School	Torrington	66	6	145	49	372	95	0	418	227	0	53				1365
Oxford Airport	Oxford	12			250	1500	80									1830
Poquonock	Windsor Locks	336	28	4	30	665	130	0	5	60	2	12	5	7	3	951
Rimmon Ridge	Beacon Falls					650										650
Taine Mountain	Burlington	7		37		254					23					314
White Memorial	Litchfield	57	8	53	88	356	10		196	345			109	2		1167
	Inland Total	759	58	3082	1249	8932	1260	1113	1481	2313	324	108	366	134	3	20423

COASTAL GROUP																
Booth Memorial	Stratford	100			40	319	15	4		414	37	1	6	1363	40	2239
East Shore Park	New Haven	5												197		197
Hammonasset	Madison	3												8		8
Lighthouse Point	NewHaven	597	20	0	0	12	2	0	1	95			11	1379	132	1652
	Orange				38											38
Quaker Ridge	Greenwich	612	204	586	2512	1457	76	347	300	3302	307	4	316	311	144	9866
Waveny Park	New Canaan	33			396	45			2	625	21					1089
	Coastal Total	1350	224	586	2986	1833	93	351	303	4436	365	5	333	3258	316	15089
2009	Grand Total	2109	282	3668	4235	10765	1353	1464	1784	6749	689	113	699	3392	319	35512

BV	Black Vulture	CH	Cooper's Hawk	RL	Rough-legged Hawk
TV	Turkey Vulture	NG	Northern Goshawk	GE	Golden Eagle
OS	Osprey	RS	Red-shouldered Hawk	AK	American Kestrel
BE	Bald Eagle	BW	Broad-winged hawk	ML	Merlin
NH	Northern Harrier	SW	Swainson's Hawk	PG	Peregrine Falcon
SS	Sharp-shinned Hawk	RT	Red-tailed hawk	UR	unidentified raptor

Lighthouse Point, New Haven - Fall 2009

	Days	Hours	BV	TV	OS	MK	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UR	TOTAL
August	5	25			93		8	6	7	4	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	6	0	1	131
September	30	209		60	635		65	106	2429	368	0	20	1525	40	0	0	379	119	30	94	5870
October	31	205	1	159	229		66	201	2656	774	4	85	123	203	0	8	924	207	100	143	5883
November	30	155	5	95	6		11	17	229	81	3	127	3	332	1	1	5	10	15	67	1008
December	6	3							1					2				1			4
Total	102	597	6	314	963		150	330	5322	1227	7	232	1652	579	1	9	1311	343	145	305	12896

Quaker Ridge, Greenwich - Fall 2009

	Days	Hours	BV	TV	OS	MK	BE	NH	SS	CH	NG	RS	BW	RT	RL	GE	AK	ML	PF	UR	TOTAL
August	10	70	6	0	89		20	9	6	8	0	2	65	0		0	11	0	0	4	220
September	28	230	1	2	440		89	63	1496	114	0	7	9705	4		1	271	80	8	44	12325
October	25	188	8	817	71	2	48	81	1620	243	3	177	96	76		7	251	65	25	43	3633
November	20	124	10	312	7		19	16	132	46	0	166	0	133		3	3	5	0	16	868
Total	83	612	25	1131	607	2	176	169	3254	411	3	352	9866	213	0	11	536	150	33	107	17046

INTERGRADE ADULT MALE BALTIMORE ORIOLE, *ICTERUS GALBULA*, X BULLOCK'S ORIOLE, *ICTERUS BULLOCKI*, IN MADISON

By Mark Szantyr

Birthday birding. It is something that I have been doing for years. I have the good fortune to be born late in the year. The last day of November is a time when western strays have frequently been recorded in Connecticut. In 2009, my birthday fell on a Monday, a day when I had to be at school, so I went out on the day before to see what I could find. On 29 November, I was birding at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, New Haven County. The day was slow. I was photographing some gulls in the main parking area when Nick Bonomo stopped by my car to say that there were a few late orioles in the park's campground. He said that one of them, a female, looked interesting to him. We teamed up to go investigate the birds.

The first oriole we located was an adult male perched out on a Red Cedar in the bright morning sun. We simultaneously noted that the bird seemed odd. It had what we thought looked like too much white in the wing. We studied the bird for awhile and I secured several good photos. We were not sure but thought that this bird, which had been reported as an adult male Baltimore Oriole for several days, looked like it might have some Bullock's Oriole in its ancestry. We finished birding the area and found an amazing total of six orioles, five looking like winter females or immatures and the one adult male.

Upon loading the images on to my computer, other characters became evident on the adult male that pointed again to a mixed heritage. Aside from the extensive amount of white in the greater wing coverts, the bird showed orange feathering in the malar area. The tail, which on Baltimore shows black bases to the rectrices, showed orange bases to the outer rectrices. The central tail feathers, normally totally black on

Baltimore Oriole, were about half to two-thirds black with the distal third being orange with a dark smudge near the tip. This tail pattern, the greater covert pattern, and orange in the malar are characters that fit Bullock's Oriole.

A check of the literature revealed an old article on hybrid oriole plumages by George Miksch Sutton. It was published in *The Auk*, Volume 55 No. 1 in January 1938. The article, "Oddly Plumaged Orioles in Western Oklahoma," describes a population of orioles that showed characters intermediate between Baltimore and Bullock's Orioles. This geographic area is a part of the contact zone for these two species' breeding territory. In the article, Sutton describes plumages showing varying degrees of evident interbreeding between the species. He includes a plate of illustrations to accompany the descriptions. The Madison bird showed characters of birds on this plate, and showed even more Bullock's-like tail characters than illustrated in this plate.

I sent my photos to two contemporary experts on the genus *Icterus*, Alvaro Jaramillo and James Rising. Both agreed that the Connecticut bird showed traits of an intergrade oriole, a bird that had both Baltimore and Bullock's genetics. It is uncertain what generation intergrade this bird was but likely not F1 (first generation).

Plate 1 shows a good representative image of this intergrade oriole.

The wing coverts show extensive white tips and edges, nearly forming a solid white bar across the greater coverts.

Shows the orange base to the outer tail feathers and more limited black to the central tail feathers.

Shows scattered orange feathering in the malar region.

Plate 2 shows a fairly typical adult male Baltimore Oriole.

Shows the more limited white edges to the greater coverts. Actually, this individual is a little darker here than may be typical but it is in the range of a normal Baltimore.



Plate 1 - *Intergrade Oriole*

Mark Szantyr photos



Plate 2 - *Adult male Baltimore Oriole*

Shows the black bases to the tail and the extensive black of the central tail feathers.

Shows the solid black malar region.

A brief search in the literature did not turn up many recent images of this hybrid combination, so we were very fortunate to secure a wide range of photos showing the characteristics fairly well. Thanks to Nick, Birthday Birding once again was full of very neat presents!



Mark Szantyr photo

Another view of the intergrade oriole present at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison in late November 2009 with several Baltimore Orioles.

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Fall, August 1 through November 30, 2009

By Greg Hanisek

Our longest season is usually our richest as well, and autumn 2009 didn't disappoint. We finally got a supremely cooperative Pacific Loon to complement an array of rarities that included two reports of the supremely secretive LeConte's Sparrow. Increasing species such as Arctic-nesting geese and Sandhill Cranes continued their upward trends, and that unparalleled morning flight juggernaut, Bluff Point in Groton, received its best coverage in a number of years. On the down side, cuckoos were nearly non-existent, and northern finches lived up to their name, staying well north of Connecticut.

Five **Greater White-fronted Geese** for the season included three singles on Oct. 18 - at Mackenzie Reservoir in Wallingford (MBa), at the UConn Storrs campus (MSz) and on Sugar Lane, Newtown (JD, RBa). The other two were at Wepawaug Reservoir, Woodbridge, on Nov. 18 (CL), and in Middlefield on Nov. 27 (MBa). The season's **Cackling Geese**, all singles, were at Broad Brook Pond, East Windsor, on Oct. 1 (CEk); over Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, on Oct. 10 & 16 (LT); on the UConn Storrs campus on Oct. 16 (CEI), at Sherwood Island State Park, Westport, on Nov. 2 (FMA); and at Fisher Meadow, Avon, on Nov. 23 (PCi). A

Barnacle Goose joined a flock of Canada Geese on Oct. 11 at Greenbacker Pond in Durham (MBa). Tundra Swans, whose main migratory pathway lies somewhat to the west, were typically sparse, with two on Middle Reservoir, Killingly, on Nov. 21-23 (PR) and one at Bantam L., Litchfield, on Nov. 22 (LFI).

Four Blue-winged Teal on Aug. 7 at White Memorial Foundation's Cemetery Pond in Litchfield were in a potential breeding area (DR). The season's only Northern Shovelers were seasonally scattered with reports from Stratford on Sept. 11 (FMA), at Milford Point on Oct. 11 (FMA) and at Pistapaug



*Hank Golet photo
Gristwold Point in Old Lyme remains one of just a few places that
consistently attract "Ipswich" Savannah Sparrows. This one was there
on Nov. 15.*

Pond, Wallingford, on Nov. 23 (DM). Three Redheads, a male and two females, visited Mackenzie Reservoir on Oct. 10 (JD); a pair was on Bristol Reservoir No. 7 (PCa) and one was at Stratford Point (MBu), both on Oct. 12; and a female was at Ash Creek, Fairfield, on Nov. 21 (ABu).

An immature male King Eider present at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison (hereafter HBSP) until at least Sept. 9 had been present over the summer (m.ob.); there were no more reports there until two (a female and an immature male) were noted Nov. 16-21 (JCn et al.).

The 168 Common Eiders on Oct. 24 at Stonington Point (GW) represented a very high number for Connecticut; they were followed by a flock of at least 30 off HBSP in early November, and there were numerous reports of smaller numbers in the eastern end of Long Island Sound. A few birds were seen as far west as Stratford, including seven at Stratford Point on Oct. 19 (FMa), and at Shippan Point, Stamford, where two females were present on Nov. 30 (PDu).

For the second year in a row, a large mixed flock of Surf and White-winged Scoters began to assemble

off Stratford Point in late November. Up to 4,000 were present this year. Those kinds of numbers have not been seen since the 1980s, when the concentration point was the Thimble Islands off Branford (fide MBu). About 1500 White-winged Scoters were at the Norwalk Islands on Nov. 29 (LFl). A flight of Black Scoters on Oct. 24 brought a total of 114 to five inland locations, with a high of 35 at Bantam Lake, Litchfield (JMa). The others were 32 at Pond Hill Pond in Norfolk (BK); 25 at Woodridge Lake, Goshen (KF); 20 at Lake Quassapaug, Middlebury (GH); and two at Aspetuck Reservoir, Easton (JD). As usual just a few were noted in the Sound compared to the large numbers of the other two species. After reports of several Long-tailed Ducks in the Sound during the summer season, one was still at Beacon Point, Stratford, on Aug. 20 (FMa). Ruddy Ducks were widely reported at lakes throughout the state, with multiple triple-digit flocks.

A seasonal highlight was a very cooperative juvenile **Pacific Loon** found Nov. 10 at Lake Quassapaug, Middle-

bury (GH). It was seen by many observers through Nov. 26, and the state's first photographic documentation for the species was obtained. A Common Loon on Aug. 2 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme was a newly arrived bird-of-the-year rather than a summering adult (DV). Several summering non-breeders were detected in Long Island Sound as usual, and a raft of six was off Sandy Point, West Haven, on Aug. 21 (NB). Among about 20 reports of Red-necked Grebes, most of them inland, were three on Gardner Lake, Salem, and two on Shenipsit Lake, Tolland, both on Nov. 2 (JMe). On Nov. 23, a movement of 154 Northern Gannets flew past Eastern Point, Groton, in about a half-hour (RBa, JD).

An American Bittern on Aug. 5 at HBSP was hard to categorize - breeder, post-breeding wanderer or southbound migrant (CEl). This species' status on the coast in summer is less clear than at inland breeding sites. A high count of four was made at HBSP on Nov. 7 (FG). An excellent inland array of 14 Great Egrets was at the Riverside Park sewage

A Hammonasset Scrapbook



Mark Szantyr photo

This juvenile Tricolored Heron settled in for a long visit at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.



Hank Golet photo

Soras were seen at a wide variety of locations during the first half of the fall season.



Mark Szantyr photo

This Western Kingbird enjoyed a long stay while re-growing its tail.



Julian Hough photo
This juvenile Hudsonian Godwit was easy to observe during its October layover.



Pat Finelli photo
Among a flurry of fly-over Sandhill Cranes statewide, this one-day visitor found by Paul Fusco was the only one seen on the ground.

pond in Hartford on Sept. 9 (PCi). The Menunketesuck River marshes in Westbrook held 20 Little Blue Herons (13 adults and seven juveniles) gorging on small Blue Crabs on Aug. 21 (CL). An immature was far inland on the Naugatuck River in Torrington on Aug. 26 (RBe). An immature Tricolored Heron found at HBSP on Sept. 20 was present to at least Oct. 6 (AR, JMy et al.). A flurry of Cattle Egrets brought singles to Stony Creek, Branford, on Aug. 12 (ABa); to Mansfield on Aug. 13 (DM); and to Guilford on Aug. 17 (DV). A Black-crowned Night-Heron was far inland in Winsted on Sept. 7 (PCa). A roost of Yellow-crowned Night-Herons at Stratford Marina grew from 23 on Sept. 13 to 44 on Sept. 29, a record high count (DV). A **White-Faced Ibis** found July 30 with a flock of at least 26 Glossy Ibis at Silver Sands State Park, Milford, remained until at least Aug. 6 (FG et al).

The pair of Mississippi Kites that nested successfully for the second year in a row in Simsbury had a juvenile out of the nest begging from both parents on Aug. 21

(JWe); one adult at Great Pond, Simsbury, on Sept. 9 was the last report from the nest area (JCo). Two, an adult and an immature, were seen flying by the Quaker Ridge hawk watch in Greenwich on Oct. 14 (BO). Not too many years ago the following scene would have been unthinkable: an immature Northern Goshawk, sitting on equipment at the Wesleyan University athletic fields in Middletown, surrounded by eight Common Ravens (THa). The season produced three **Swainson's Hawk** reports: a dark morph juvenile on Sept. 17 in Windsor (JWo), a light morph juvenile on Sept. 18 in Torrington (RBe) and a dark juvenile on Sept. 25 at Johnnycake Mt. in Burlington (PCa). A very early juvenile Golden Eagle passed Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, on Sept. 14 (BO, BV et al.). (Please see the seasonal hawk count summary elsewhere in this issue).

Two adult Virginia Rails were accompanied by three downy chicks on Aug. 8 at Bloomfield Reservoir No. 3 (PCi). A seldom-detected look at a peak Sora movement resulted from discovery

of singles Sept. 21 at Little Pond, Litchfield (DR), and Sept. 21-23 at Cove Island, Stamford (SZ, PDU), plus more significantly, 21 found on Sept. 21 by working coves on the lower Connecticut River by boat (HG). The season's only **Common Moorhen** turned up on Oct. 2 at Bantam Lake, Litchfield (DR). An American Coot was an early arrival Aug. 11 at Batterson Pond, Farmington, (PCi). **Sandhill Cranes** maintained their status as increasing migrants. Two passed by Quaker Ridge, Greenwich, on Sept. 10 (BO), with five there on Oct. 29 (BO). Presumably these were the same five seen earlier in Massachusetts and Rhode Island and later in New

Jersey and Pennsylvania. One passed a backyard hawk watch in Windsor on Sept. 15 (JWo), and another was on the ground Oct. 30 at HBSP (PFu). Quaker Ridge recorded two more on Nov. 1 (BO).

A total of about 45 American Golden Plovers for the season included 18 on Aug. 29 at Rocky Hill meadows (PDe et al.). An **American Avocet** made a one-day stop at Milford Point on Aug. 19 (BB et al.). A late Spotted Sandpiper was found on Nov. 29 at Sherwood Island and stayed into December (TG). A flock of nine Solitary Sandpipers flew over Station 43, South Windsor, on Aug. 6 (PCi), and the same number was noted at Rocky



Frank Mantlik photo
 This Pacific Loon at Lake Quassapaug in Middlebury cooperated well enough to provide the state's first photographic documentation of the species.

Hill meadows on Aug. 7 (PCi). An excellent season for Whimbrel produced reports of about 30, including eight at Milford Point on Aug. 27 (JO, JD) and nine at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Stratford, on Sept. 7 (TG). Two Hudsonian Godwits for the season both arrived on easterly winds on Oct. 17, at Sherwood Island (AHa) and at HBSP (JCn). The Hammo bird stayed until at least Nov. 4. The season's only Marbled Godwit was at Milford Point Aug. 18-Sept. 10 (DV et al.). A juvenile Red Knot was still at Penfield Reef, Fairfield, on Nov. 14 (JRa).

A Sanderling was unexpected Aug. 17-18 at Litchfield Town Beach on Bantam Lake (ADi et al.). The relatively small mudflats at Grace Salmon Park on the Saugatuck River in Westport continue to produce excellent numbers of migrant shorebirds, such as the 800 Semipalmated Sandpipers there on Aug. 6 (FMa). A meager flight of Western Sandpipers produced a high of three juveniles on Aug. 25 at Milford Point (NB). At least 60 Least Sandpipers were at Rocky Hill Meadows

on Aug. 7 along with eight Semipalmated Sandpipers, a ratio in keeping with the inland location (PCi). Four Baird's Sandpipers for the season were at Windham Airport in Windham on Aug. 2 (PR); at Sandy Point, West Haven, on Aug. 20 (JHo); at HBSP on Aug. 30-Sept. 1 (PDU, JHo), and on Oct 20 at HBSP (RBa, NC). The high count of Pectoral Sandpipers was nine on Aug. 13 at Rocky Hill meadows (PCi). The first of 14 Stilt Sandpipers, a good seasonal total, was at Shell Beach marsh in Guilford on Aug. 2 (DV). A total of nine at two Stratford locations on Sept. 23 was unusual (FMa), and one on Oct. 22-23 in Old Lyme was late (HG).

Seven Buff-breasted Sandpipers for the season consisted of singles on Aug. 20 at Sandy Point, West Haven (JHo); on Aug. 25 at Windham Airport (PR), on Aug. 30-Sept. 1 at HBSP (PDU, JHo), on Aug. 29 -Sept. 9 at Rocky Hill Meadows (JMa, PCi et al.), on Sept. 18 at Rocky Hill (PCi), and on Sept. 28 at Griswold Point in Old Lyme (HG). The run ended with three on Sept. 30 at Station 43 in South

Windsor (RM). A single Long-billed Dowitcher, always hard to come by, was with up to 75 Short-billed Dowitchers on Aug. 12-25 at Stratford Marina (FMA et al.). A Wilson's Snipe on Aug. 8 at Sherwood Island fit the profile of an early south-bound migrant, although this species' fall migration schedule in the state is poorly known (LT). The lone **Wilson's Phalarope** cavorted on Aug. 21-22 at the Access Road pools in Stratford (NB et al.). A rare and unexpected string of **Red Phalarope** sightings involved one on Sept. 9 from a swallow cruise boat on the Connecticut River in Old Lyme (AG); one on Sept. 20 two miles

off Stamford (ACo); and one on Oct. 4 on the Connecticut River at South Windsor (SZ, DJ). A phalarope sp. made a brief appearance off Shippan Point, Stamford, on Sept. 12 (PDU).

Three reports of **Parasitic Jaegers** were all in the expected time frame: one on Sept. 11 off Shippan Point, Stamford (PDU); one sub-adult on Sept. 12 off Enders Island, Mystic (PR, GW); and one on Sept. 28 off Fairfield (JRa). The first four immature Laughing Gulls were noted Aug. 9 at Southport (DV), and 274 were counted at Short Beach, Stratford, on Sept. 30 (FMA). Greenwich Harbor still held 16 on Nov.



Bob Simon photo
Two observers hailed a boater to photograph this Red Phalarope in the Connecticut River in South Windsor.

20 (JZe). An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull was at Seaside Park, Bridgeport, on Aug. 9 (DV); and a third-cycle bird was at Eastern Point, Groton, on Aug. 29 (PR, GW). The season's only **Royal Tern** visited Milford Point on Aug. 1 (JD). Griswold Point in Old Lyme held c. 500 Common Terns, including many young-of-the-year, on Aug. 2 (DV). These may have been birds reared in both Connecticut and New York waters. A flock of 35 Forster's Terns was at Lords Cove in Lyme/Old Lyme, a regular gathering place, on Aug. 8 (HG). Two Black Terns foraged at the mouth of the Housatonic River on Aug. 15, with one present to Aug. 17 (FMa, CL et al.). Another was at Cornfield Point, Old Saybrook, on Sept. 12 (NB). The latest report of a Black Skimmer involved a juvenile on Sept. 21 at Sandy Point (JHo).

After a very poor summer season for both species of cuckoo, just one Black-billed Cuckoo, at Maricostas Preserve in Washington on Sept. 21 (OS), and one Yellow-billed Cuckoo, at Bluff Point, Groton, on Sept. 28 (PR), were reported. The

first report of a Short-eared Owl came from Lighthouse Point on Oct. 15 (DC). The first southbound Common Nighthawks were over East Granby (three birds) and Collinsville (five birds) on Aug. 14 (BK, BR). On Aug. 22, c. 500 were over downtown Torrington (TL); 100+ were over Manchester and c. 90 over Willimantic (BH); and reports of c. 30 each came from Bristol (DZ) and Somers (JCo). On Aug. 23, c. 1000 were at New Hartford center (FZ), 150 at Granby center (FZ) and 100 in Woodbury (DSm). About 200 were over Stamford on Aug. 24 (BI). On Aug. 30, c. 400 were at Southington (JA), and on Sept. 3, c. 200 each were in Harwinton (PCa) and Mansfield (DM). A late nighthawk sp. flew past Stamford on Oct. 25 (PDu). Lighthouse Point produced c. 450 passage Chimney Swifts on Sept. 1 (BB). The best Ruby-throated Hummingbird flights at Lighthouse were 56 on Sept. 7 and 55 on Sept. 14 (GH). A late Ruby-throated visited a Stratford feeder until Oct. 22 (FMa). A **Selasphorous hummingbird** was at Cove Island, Stamford, on Oct. 14 (PDu).

Single Red-headed Wood-

peckers were in Middlebury until at least Aug. 16 (GH); in Wilton on Aug. 28 (CS); at Cove Island, Stamford, on Oct. 25 (PDU); on Nov. 1 at Quaker Ridge, Greenwich (LT); and at Northwest Park, Windsor, from Nov. 21 through the period (LN et al.). There also were at least five recorded in passage at the Lighthouse Point hawk watch (m.ob.). An **intergrade flicker**, showing characters of both Yellow-shafted and Red-shafted Northern Flickers, was at Bluff Point, Gorton, on Sept. 19 (GW, PR). An article on this sighting appeared in *The Connecticut Warbler*, Vol. 30 No. 1.

The first of seven Olive-sided Flycatcher reports came from Norfolk on Aug. 25 (PCa). An Eastern Wood-Pewee was at the tail end of the species' migration period on Oct. 11 at Northwest Park, Windsor (PDe). The only reports of Yellow-bellied Flycatchers were singles Aug. 27 at Lighthouse Point (JHo) and Sept. 14 in Stratford (BW). An exceptional season for **Western Kingbirds** produced an early one on Aug. 31 at HBSP (RP). Another lingered at HBSP from Oct. 24 to Nov. 16 (m.ob.) This

bird was tailless when found and regrew its tail during the extended stay. One with a full tail flew by Lighthouse Point on Oct. 26 (GH). Two Northern Shrikes for the season were in New Hartford on Nov. 1 (FZ) and in Winchester on Nov. 26 (RBe). A noteworthy late record for Red-eyed Vireo came from Bent of the River Audubon in Southbury on Nov. 13 (PCo).

Corvids continue to conquer Connecticut. An impressive flock of 150 to 200 Fish Crows made a noisy pass through Brookfield on Sept. 23 (PCo), followed by a flock of c. 170 on Oct. 9 at Boothe Memorial Park in Stratford (FMA). Sizeable flocks are being noted more often, but they're usually in double digits, not triple. Passage Purple Martins seldom exceed single digits at Lighthouse Point, so c. 50 on Aug. 30, including 17 on wires at one time, marked an exceptional flight day (GH). The latest N. Rough-winged Swallow was noted on Nov. 11 at East Shore Park, New Haven (NB); there was no repeat of last year's lingering deep into winter by this species. A late flock of eight Cliff Swallows passed

Lighthouse Point on Oct. 19 (NB). It's hard to believe any season with Cave Swallows could be considered a slow one, but by recent standards this one was. The first one was reported on Oct. 25 at Cove Island, Stamford (PDU). There was one on Nov. 16 at Lighthouse Point (GH) and two at Lighthouse the next day (NB), well below recent totals. More than 200 were reported in autumn 2008. Significant Barn Swallow movements on Aug. 30-31 at Lighthouse Point produced counts of 400 and 330, respectively (GH).

The nine reports of Gray-cheeked (type) Thrushes included one that the observer considered a candidate for Bicknell's Thrush. This remains perhaps the most difficult identification problem involving regularly occurring Connecticut birds. The first southbound Swainson's Thrush was reported Aug. 28 in Torrington (DR). Lighthouse Point produced a flight of 10,500 American Robins on Nov. 10 (BB). The two singing male **Sedge Wrens** reported from Station 43, South Windsor, in July were still present on Aug. 1 (BDw). One female/imma-

ture **Northern Wheatear** was found on Sept. 4 at HBSP (PF). An adult male found Sept 5 at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford, remained and cooperated well for observers through Sept. 14 (MC, PDe), while another female/immature was at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks Oct. 1-4 (RT). So we had one make an unusually long stay and another that appeared later than normal. A flock of 17 American Pipits on Sept. 22 at Windham Airport in Windham represented a good count for the date (PR).

The only report of Golden-winged Warbler was an adult male on Sept. 20 in Nauagtuck State Forest (GH). The latest Tennessee Warbler visited a Waterford yard on Nov. 13 (CC). Among about 15 Orange-crowned Warblers for the season were two at Sherwood Island on Nov. 11 (TG). The first of 12 Cape May Warbler reports came from Lighthouse Point on Aug. 27 (JHo). A big passerine movement Oct. 16 produced 60 Palm Warblers at East Shore Park in New Haven, including one flock of 45 feeding together on the lawn (NB). The latest

Blackpoll Warbler report came from Sherwood Island on Nov. 11 (TG). The only Kentucky Warbler report came from Greenwich Point on Sept. 25 (MSa). A Hooded Warbler was late on Oct. 5 in Old Lyme (fide GW), as was a Wilson's Warbler on Nov. 8 in Watertown (GH). Two of the eight reports of Yellow-breasted Chat involved birds banded on Sept. 1 at Milford Point (SH) and Sept. 26 at Birdcraft Sanctuary in Fairfield (KV).

Highlights of the warbler flights at Bluff Point State Park in Groton (provided by Elphick, Provencher, Williams et al.), included the following summaries: Sept. 6 - 130 warblers of 16 species mostly American Redstarts; Sept. 14 - 600 warblers of 16 species; Sept. 15 - 200/16; Sept. 19 - 250/13; Sept. 20 - 100/12; Sept. 25 - 700/16; Sept. 30 - 800/11, including 600+ Blackpoll Warblers; Oct. 2 - 1000/16, including 750 Blackpolls; Oct. 5 - 4000/15, mainly Yellow-rumped Warblers. There were also 1600 warblers that day at Lighthouse Point, an unusually heavy morning flight for that location.

A male **Western Tanager** made a fast pass through Lighthouse Point on Sept. 30 (DC, DM). An American Tree Sparrow was early on Oct. 17 in Greenwich (ACu). The first of 11 Clay-colored Sparrows for the season was found at Jennings Beach in Fairfield on Sept. 12 (TG, PDu). About 15 reports of Vesper Sparrows included three at Governor's Field, Newtown, on Oct. 11 (RBA) and two at both Silver Sands State Park, Milford, on Oct. 16-19 (SS) and at Allen's Meadow, Wilton, on Oct. 19 (LT). The season's lone **Lark Sparrow** was found Sept. 29 at HBSP (JO), and remained through at least Oct. 15. Grasshopper Sparrows are seldom seen in fall migration, so the following reports mark this as a good season: one on Oct. 4 at Durham Fairgrounds (JMe); two on Oct. 8 at Farmington Meadows (SJ); and one on Oct. 9 in Wilton (LT). The close temporal spacing also illustrates a significant migration window.

Another seasonal highlight involved the secretive **LeConte's Sparrow**. One was observed on Oct. 9 at Station 43, South Windsor (BA,

RM). Details provided by the observers indicated the bird was an immature. A second report came from North Coventry on Nov. 26, with details more suggestive of an adult (JT). The first two Nelson's Sparrows were at Long Beach, Stratford, on Sept. 26 (CB). The first Fox Sparrow was very early on Oct. 6 in Milford (FG). Lincoln's Sparrow, noted for moving on an earlier schedule than most of the migrant sparrow species, was first reported Aug. 28 at Lighthouse Point (GN) and Aug. 29 in Simsbury (RBe). An increase in birder numbers and skill has resulted in a surge of reports of this species during its typical fall migration period, including seven on Sept. 26 at Maricostas Preserve in Washington (PS, BS) and at least 10 at Farmington Meadows on Oct. 8 (SJ). A White-throated Sparrow feeding three nestlings at Hop Brook Lake in Middlebury on Sept. 14 was both late and south of usual nesting areas (TL). The season's first White-crowned Sparrow was reported Oct. 1 at Veterans Park in Wallingford (JO). A juvenile Dark-eyed Junco on Sept. 1 in Goshen indicated a late

nesting (KF). The first Lapland Longspur occurred Oct. 9 at Great Island, Old Lyme (HG).

Blue Grosbeaks were seen Sept. 13-14 at Cove Island, Stamford (PDU et al.); Oct. 4 at Lighthouse Point (SM); Oct. 5 at Allen's Meadow, Wilton (PH); Oct. 7 at Sherwood Island (TG, JD); and Oct. 9 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (CC). A high count of 16 Indigo Buntings on Sept. 19 at Northwest Park, Windsor, included a young bird begging (PCi). Among the 25 Dickcissels reported for the season, four were in passage at Lighthouse Point on Oct. 5 (GH et al.).

A flight of c. 550 Bobolinks passed Lighthouse Point on Aug. 31 (GH). Early Rusty Blackbirds appeared at Little Pond in Litchfield on Sept. 20 (DR) and at HBSP on Sept. 21 (PDe). Big flight days for Common Grackles at Lighthouse Point included 125,000 on Nov. 16 (GH) and 135,000 on Nov. 17 (BB). The high count for the Boat-tailed Grackle roost in Stratford was 37 on Nov. 30 (FMa). An unusual late concentration of six Baltimore Orioles

was at HBSP on Nov. 29, including an adult male that had intermediate characters identifying it as **Baltimore X Bullock's Oriole hybrid** (MSz, NB).

American Goldfinches, noted for late breeding, were still feeding young out of the nest on Oct. 16 in Goshen (KF), Oct. 17 in Berlin (AT) and Oct. 23 in Greenwich (ACu). Northern finches mounted no significant movements. The migration period could boast little more than a few Pine Siskins, topped by one flock of c. 20 on Oct. 21 in West Hartford (SF), and a very modest flight of Purple Finches. No other species were recorded. Single Pine Siskins on Aug. 14 in a Greenwich yard (ACu) and on Aug. 21 in a Guilford yard (AHo) probably represented the tail end of last winter's mega-flight that produced widespread breeding in the state.

Exotics: A Ruddy Shelduck was in Hamden in late August (FMc) with a variety of sightings tracking westward movement as far as Norwalk on Oct. 28 (DV).

Observers: Jayne Amico, Ralph Amodei, Mark Aronson, Phil Asprelli, Bill Asteriades, Renee Baade (RBA), David Babington, Jim Bair (JBA), Bill Banks, Charlie Barnard, Scott Baron, Aaron Barriger (ABa), Mark Barriger (MBA), Ray Belding (RBe), Art Benson (ABe), Andrew Block (ABl), Nick Bonomo, Milan Bull (MBu), Alex Burdo (ABu), Dana Campbell, Paul Carrier (PCa), Mona Cavalero, Paul Cianfagione (PCi), Carolyn Cimino, Patrick Comins (PCo), Al Collins (ACo), Jan Collins (JCo), Jerry Connolly (JCn), Annette Cunniffe (ACu), Neil Currie, Andrew Dasinger (ADa), Peter DeGennaro (PDn), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Buzz Devine (BDe), Bob Dewire (BDw), Mardi Dickinson (MDk); Townsend Dickinson, Mike DiGiorgio (MDi), Angela Dimmitt (ADi), Randy Domina, Mike Doyle (MDo), Jim Dugan, Patrick Dugan (PDu), Cynthia Ehlinger (CEh), Carl Ekroth (CEk), Chris Elphick (CEl), Dennis Elphick, Patrice Favreau (PFa), Kevin Finnan, Larry Fischer (LFi), Larry Flynn (LFl), Sam Fried, Paul Fusco (PFu), Frank Gallo, Rick Gedney, Hank Golet, Tina Green,

Andy Griswold, Lorraine Gunderson, Tony Hager (THa), AJ Hand (AHa), Greg Hanisek, Stacy Hanks, Ernie Harris, Phil Henson, Brian Hiller, John Himmelman (JHi), Tom Hook (THo), Amy Hopkins (AHo), Julian Hough (JHo), Brenda Inskip, Jalna Jaeger, Elsbeth Johnson, Kris Johnson, Lynn James, Denise Jernigan, Brian Kleinman, Cindi Kobak, Scott Kruitbosch, Dave Lawton (DLa), Twan Leenders, Chris Loscalzo, Don Lukaszek (DLu), Joanne Luppi, Rick Macsuga, Frank Mantlik (FMa), John Marshall (JMa), John Maynard (JMy), Steve Mayo, Flo McBride (FMc), Janet Mehmel (JMh), Jamie Meyers (JMe), Mike Moccio (MMc), Judy Moore (JMo), Marty Moore (MMo), Don Morgan, Sean Murtha, Chris Nevins, Gina Nichol, Larry Nichols, John Oshlick, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Brian

O'Toole, Richard Payne, Beverly Propen, Dave Provencher, James Randall (JRa), Bill Roberts, Jo-Anne Roberts (JRo), Arne Rosengren, Dave Rosgen, Phil Rusch, Meredith Sampson (MSa), Zellene Sandler, Mark Scott (MSc), John Schwarz (JSc), Cathy Smith, Donna Rose Smith (DSm), Olaf Soltau, Dori Sosensky (DSo), Steve Spector, BK Stafford, Peary Stafford, Maria Stockmal (MSt), Jack Swatt (JSw), Mark Szantyr (MSz), James Taylor, Rollin Tebbetts, Andy Thiede, Luke Tiller, Benjamin Van Doren, Kathy Van Der Au, Dennis Varza, Mike Warner, Brian Webster, John Weeks (JWe), Jack Wells (JWl), Glenn Williams, Joe Wojtanowski (JWo), Sara Zagorski, Roy Zartarian, Joe Zeranski (JZe), Jim Zipp (JZi), David Zomick, Betty Zuraw, Fran Zygmunt.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Julian Hough

We're going quackers this month (sorry, couldn't help myself) with a lone, dappled female-type bird sitting close to shore. Its brown, scalloped plumage could fit any of several species found in Connecticut - Mallard, Black Duck, either teal, Gadwall and Northern Shoveler.

A quick look at the bill and Northern Shoveler is immediately out. The bill seems a little thinner, less deep and is predominantly dark, so Black Duck and Mallard are out since they show an overall paler bill (the latter often variable in the paleness of the bill, but often with an irregular dark spot in the center).

Our bird looks rather monotone, even allowing for the fact it is in black and white, with a rounded head, mealy look to the head and neck and scalloped flanks and upper parts. There don't seem to be many plumage clues since the general pattern fits both Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal and Gadwall. We need to concentrate on structure, bill pattern and wing pattern, especially the speculum pattern.

All the contenders have rather coarse, or speckled head patterns, but female-type Blue-winged Teals have a rather



well-defined head pattern with a dark eye stripe, pale supercillium and pale loreal spot at the base of the bill. This doesn't match our bird, so we are left with Green-winged Teal and Gadwall. These species are different in structure, Green-winged Teal being compact and relatively small-headed compared to the body, while Gadwall is larger and often gray-headed.

Of course, everyone will have identified this as a female Gadwall long before my preamble. That nice obvious little white patch on the rear of the wings is the speculum and diagnostic of Gadwall. This area, when not cloaked by overlapping feathers, is often a great clue to female dabbling ducks' identity. The other feature typical of Gadwall, and lacking in other species, is the pale line (orange-flesh in life) along the base of the bill. This female Gadwall was photographed by Mark Szantyr at Gloucester, Mass., in March 2009.



Photo Challenge No. 69

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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The Connecticut Warbler (ISSN 1077-0283) is devoted to the study of birds and their conservation in Connecticut and is published quarterly (January, April, July, and October) by the Connecticut Ornithological Association.

Send manuscripts to the Editor. Please type double spaced with ample margins, on one side of a sheet. Submit a copy on a computer disk, if possible. Style should follow usage in recent issues. All manuscripts receive peer review.

Illustrations and photographs are needed and welcome. Line art of Connecticut and regional birds should be submitted as good quality prints or in original form. All submitted materials will be returned. We can use good quality photographs of birds unaccompanied by an article but with caption including species, date, locality, and other pertinent information.

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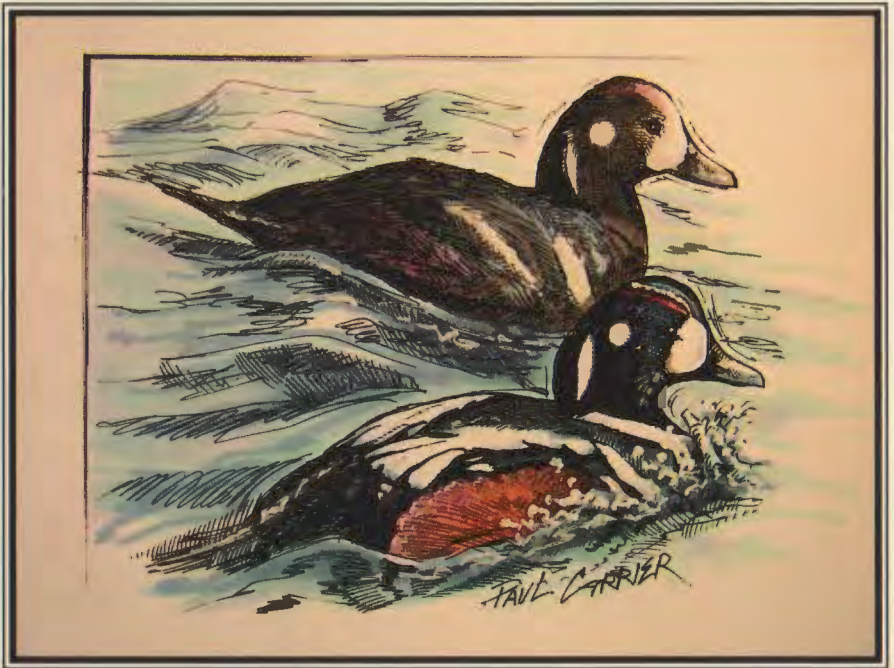
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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



Volume 30 No. 3

July 2010

Pages 89-132

The Connecticut Warbler

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Volume 30, Number 3

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ON THE COVER

Harlequin Ducks

Paul Carrier of Harwinton created the expressive pair of Harlequin Ducks that grace this issue's cover. In the Winter Field Notes column you'll find information on a male Harlequin Duck that caused a lot of excitement on the Farmington River. Birders came from around the state to see it.

FIFTEENTH REPORT OF THE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE OF CONNECTICUT

By Jay Kaplan and Greg Hanisek

In the Fourteenth Report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (see April 2009 Vol. 29 No.2 of *The Connecticut Warbler*), two new species, Slaty-backed Gull and Broad-billed Hummingbird, were added to Connecticut's State List. This year, another species, Western Meadowlark, was accepted to the list bringing the state total to 424 birds.

As discussed in recent ARCC reports, advances in digital photography have, in one sense, made the committee's work somewhat easier because, as the old saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words." Well, maybe.... It is still imperative that written documentation accompanies photographic submissions. Details concerning rare sightings provide a much fuller accounting and valuable information that cannot be inferred from photos alone. It should be emphasized that all records submitted to the committee are archived for use by future generations of Connecticut ornithologists and birders. The maintenance of older records can be of great value as new information may shed light on records received long ago. In fact, at this time, Connecticut's only Jackdaw report, a West Haven sighting from 1988, is being re-opened in light of new information on the appearance of this species on this side of the Atlantic. The record originally was not accepted because of origin questions. Other old records may also be re-opened and reviewed.

At a recent meeting the committee touched upon two topics that may be of interest to Connecticut birders. The first concerns the reporting of unusual subspecies or hybrids that may appear in the state. It should be noted that the committee does review such reports. In this report, one will find accepted records for "Black" Brant, a western subspecies of Brant that occurred with our familiar eastern subspecies, "Atlantic" or "Pale-bellied" Brant. Attention was also paid

to a possible Glossy X White-faced Ibis hybrid. A committee member reported that a researcher in Arizona is currently working on how to distinguish such ibis hybrids.

A second issue of note is that the ARCC portion on the COA website has been updated and careful scrutiny will find that the Review List now includes Tufted Duck and Black-throated Gray Warbler. These species, originally on the Review List, were deleted after numerous accepted records indicated an emerging pattern of increased vagrancy of these birds to our area. Now, following a decade or more without reports for these species, the committee has determined that they should be returned to the Review List. Interestingly enough, one might note the numerous reports for Northern Wheatear found in this report. The committee will be watching carefully over the next few seasons to determine if action is warranted concerning this handsome Review List vagrant.

Finally, it should be noted that the secretary of the committee has received numerous e-mails from Connecticut birders concerning the status of the Graylag Goose reported from Wallingford in the fall of 2008. Committee members continue their investigation on the status of this species. At present, there is one accepted North American record for this goose, from an offshore oil rig near Newfoundland. At present, there have not been enough reports to suggest any pattern of occurrence for this species in New England, but the committee continues to seek input from experts in Northern Europe, Iceland and Greenland. Decisions such as this one take time and we ask for patience

STATE LIST AND REVIEW LIST

The state list now stands at 424. The committee depends on observers to submit their reports of species on the Review List (they are species marked with an asterisk on the COA Checklist plus any species new to the state). The most recent State List and Review List can be viewed on the COA Checklist at www.ctbirding.org. Submit written reports along with documentary material to Jay Kaplan, ARCC chairman, (address below).

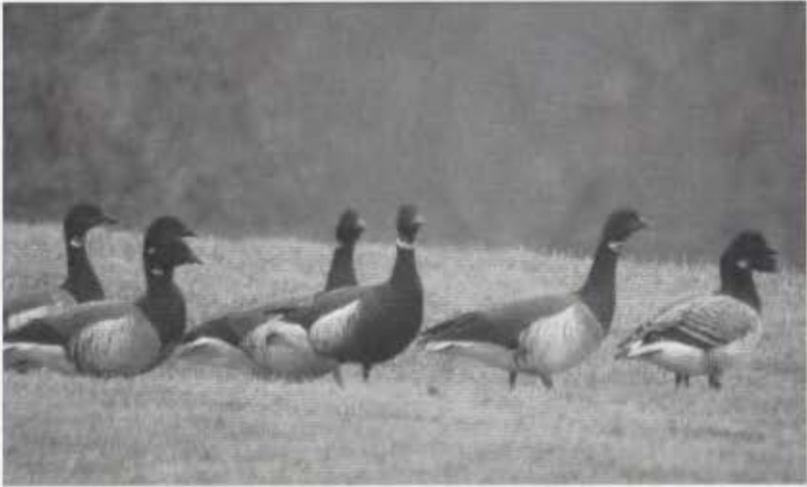
FORMAT

This report continues the format of previous reports. In the case of accepted records, only observers who submitted reports are listed, with the original finder listed first followed by an asterisk. Observers who submitted a photo are acknowledged with ‡ following their names. Hyphenated numbers (e.g. 02-01) preceding the observers are the ARCC file numbers. The species are listed in order according to the AOU Checklist. Multiple records of a particular species are listed chronologically. Months of the year are shortened to their first three letters.

ACCEPTED RECORDS

"BLACK" BRANT (*Branta bernicla nigricans*) A bird was found 10 Apr 2009 at Short Beach, Stratford (09-21 Nick Bonomo*‡, Bruce Finnan‡). The discovery, among a flock of Atlantic Brant (*Branta bernicla hrota*), represented a first accepted state record for this subspecies, which breeds in the western North American high Arctic and winters primarily along the West Coast. It remained through at least 13 Apr. Another individual was found on 24 Jan 2010 at Harkness Memorial State Park, Waterford (10-01 Nick Bonomo*‡). It was seen through at least 30 Jan, with sightings by other observers at adjacent Waterford Beach Park and at nearby Eastern Point, Groton. There are a number of records of this form from neighboring and nearby states.

PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia pacifica*) A juvenile was found on 10 Nov 2009 at Lake Quassapaug in Middlebury (09-16 Greg Hanisek*, Bruce Finnan‡, Frank Gallo‡, Frank Mantlik‡, Mark Szantyr‡, Charles Barnard). This cooperative bird remained on the lake through 26 Nov. It was seen by many observers, and the wide array of digital images obtained provided the state's first photographic documentation for this species. There was one previous accepted sight record. The bird's presence on the confines of a mid-sized lake facilitated the documentation that had been frustratingly elusive with a number of previous reports from Long Island Sound, where



Nick Bonomo photo

The extensive dark underparts and thick neck collar are characteristic of "Black" Brant. This is the bird found at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford.

distance, lighting, weather conditions and brief appearances left room for doubt.

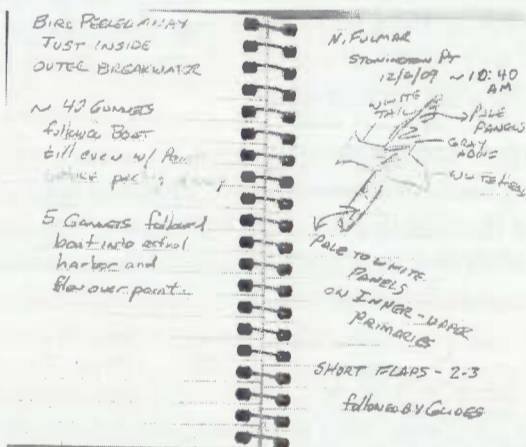
WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*) One was found on 30 Jul 2009 at Silver Sands State Park in Milford (09-04 Frank Gallo*‡, Mark Szantyr‡, Charles Barnard). The bird, present until at least 6 Aug, was believed to be a molting adult. This is the sixth state record, with the others all occurring in spring. Of additional interest, Fran Zygmunt photographed a possible hybrid White-faced X Glossy Ibis on 6 Aug 2009 at Silver Sands. Last year an adult White-faced Ibis was seen in a nesting colony of Glossy Ibis in Massachusetts. The bird was seen to drop into the colony, but nesting was not confirmed. Future White-faced Ibis reports must be carefully scrutinized to eliminate hybrid birds

NORTHERN FULMAR (*Fulmarus glacialis*) One was observed from Stonington Point on 6 Dec 2009 (09-19 Phil Rusch*). The bird followed an incoming fishing trawler to the outer breakwater, accompanied by hundreds of gulls and about 70 Northern Gannets. The observer, a veteran of more than 30 pelagic trips, was familiar with the species, providing a written description of appearance and behavior, along with a

sketch. The bird immediately reversed course when reaching the breakwater, illustrating why this and other pelagic birds remain very rare in Long Island Sound. This is a third state record, following a specimen taken off Branford on 10 Oct 1909 (Zeranski & Baptist) and a bird photographed from a boat off Fairfield County on 14 Sep 1997 (Connecticut Warbler, Vol. 18 No. 4)

RED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus fulicaria*) One in basic plumage was seen on 20 Sep 2009 from a boat in Long Island Sound off Shippan Point, Stamford (09-06 Al Collins*). The bird was seen in flight and on the water at close range. One was found on 4 Oct 2009 swimming in the Connecticut River near the Vibert Road boat launch in South Windsor (09-07 Denise Jernigan*, Sara Zagorski*, Robert Simon†). One of the observers pointed out the bird to the photographer, who was launching a kayak. He obtained digital images. The bird appeared to be molting from juvenile into first-winter plumage.

MEW GULL (*Canus canus*) An adult was found on 20 March 09 on the beach at Bradley Point, West Haven (09-03 Nick Bonomo*†, Mark Szantyr†, Frank Gallo†). Close observation and excellent photos, including detailed shots of the



Phil Rusch provided this simple but effective sketch, enhanced with field notes, that was a key to documenting one of the state's few accepted records for Northern Fulmar



Frank Gallo photo
The wing tip pattern illustrated in this image showed the West Haven Mew Gull to belong to the Eurasian subspecies *Larus canus canus*.

spread wing, allowed identification of this individual as the nominate form from Eurasia, *Canus canus canus*, known as "Common" Gull, the expected subspecies in the Northeast. This represents the first photo documentation for Connecticut. Two previous sight records cited by Zeranski & Baptist date to 1965 and 1973. In neither case was subspecific identity determined.

DOVEKIE (*Alle alle*) One was picked up alive on 21 Dec 2009 on Tobacco Road, Lebanon (09-08 Steve Morytko†). It was transported to Tufts University Veterinary School in Massachusetts, where it succumbed.

CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*) One was heard calling for about five minutes at about 5:00 a.m. on 3 May 2009 at Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington (09-18 Phil Rusch*, Jim Dugan). The second observer heard the bird at about 10 p.m. and saw it silhouetted in flight.

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) One was present 21-23 Jun 2009 at the Aspetuck Land Trust's Trout Brook Valley Preserve in Easton (09-05 Peter Davenport*, James Dugan†). A video tape was obtained by Dugan on 23 Jun. The bird fits the predominant pattern of occur-



Mark Szantyr created these highly detailed drawings of the state's first documented Western Meadowlark.

rence. Of at least 12 state records, two are in Oct, with remainder in spring and early summer.

NORTHERN WHEATEAR (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) A female/immature male was photographed at Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison, on 4 Sep 2009 (09-11 Paul Fusco*†). An adult male was found at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford on 5 Sep. 2009 (09-12 Mona Cavellero*, Paul Desjardins*, Julian Hough†, Bruce Finnan†, Mark Szantyr†). This bird stayed through 14 Sep and was seen by many observers. Another female/immature male was found at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks on 1 Oct 2009 (09-13 Rollin Tebbets*†). It was present through 4 Oct, a late stay for this species with a very consistent mid-Sep arrival schedule. The arrivals of the first two were a bit early. It's worth noting that these birds were found at the three premier locations in the state for this species, with previous records at each of them.

LECONTE'S SPARROW (*Ammodramus leconteii*) Two observers found one on 9 Oct 2009 on Strong Road in the Station 43 area of South Windsor (09-14 William Asteriades*, Rick Macsuga*). This secretive species is difficult to observe, but in this case it showed itself long enough to allow for a detailed description. This represents the fifth state record for a species that is probably under-reported because of its skulking nature.

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) An adult male made an unexpected visit to a backyard in Branford on 14 July 2009 (09-09 Diane Hull*†). The observer was able to get identifiable photos, an increasingly and gratifyingly regular event given the advent of easy-to-use digital cameras. The mid-summer sighting did not fit the traditional pattern for strays from the western mountains, which are usually found in the Northeast in late fall or winter (as in the case of the Sterling bird, below). However, recently a number of vagrants from that region have been turning up in the Northeast in early to mid-summer. A female made a brief appearance on 20 Dec 2009 in the observer's yard at 179 Main St., Sterling (09-17 Robert Dixon*, Linda Dixon†). The bird was



Frank Mantlik photo

There was no question about the identity of these Trumpeter Swans visiting a pond in Stratford, but their origin was problematic.

present for only a few minutes, but fortunately the observer and his wife were in the yard taking pictures after an 18-inch overnight snowfall. She was able to take several photos before the bird flew off.

WESTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella neglecta*) One was found on 20 April 2009 on the model airplane field at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (09-02 Tina Green*, Patrick Dugan‡, AJ Hand‡, Nick Bonomo‡, Mark Szantyr‡, Meredith Sampson‡). Despite the well-known difficulties this identification presents, the observer quickly notified others of her suspicions about its identity. Others were able to get photos on 20 April under difficult weather conditions. Fortunately the bird remained, in direct comparison with several Eastern Meadowlarks, through at least 25 April. This allowed for compilation of an excellent set of digital images and, crucially, a voice recording by Bonomo of the species' blackbird-like "churk" call. Szantyr also provided color-illustrated field notes. This represents a first state record. There had been reports of one or more singing Western Meadowlarks from the Mansfield-Storrs area from 1965 to 1975, but no documentation was preserved, a situation described in detail by Clark.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED -ORIGIN QUESTIONABLE

TRUMPETER SWAN (*Cygnus buccinator*) Two were on Cran-



Bruce Finnan photo

In this image from Lake Quassapaug in Middlebury, the swollen-necked appearance and small bill typical of Pacific Loon are evident. The bird has rolled onto its side, revealing white underparts that are usually concealed beneath the water.

bury Pond, Stratford, 28 Mar - 1 April 2010 (Brian Webster*, Frank Mantlik‡, Brenda Inskeep‡; Charles Barnard). Identification was not an issue, but unlike a group of seven Trumpeter Swans that appeared in the lower Connecticut River Valley in Feb and Mar 2007, these birds lacked origin markers. The 2007 birds, seen in Deep River and Chester, bore wing tags that pinpointed their place of origin as an Ontario introduction project. An individual in Danbury in 1993 also was traced to the Ontario project. Inability to establish origin for the Stratford birds resulted in a vote not to accept. There are no proven records of wild Trumpeter Swans wandering to the Northeast in historic times, and the extent of their range and movements up to and including early European settlement remains a matter of uncertainty. Re-introduction (or introduction, depending on interpretation of the historic range) has been undertaken as far eastward as Ontario. Without wing tags or bands, it is impossible to tell if the birds came from any of these projects. Establishing their wild status is further complicated by American Birding Association rules on declaring an introduced population as naturally

reproducing and established. For more information on this process, visit www.aba.org/checklist/exotics.html. In this instance the establishment arguments could be considered moot because there is no way to determine the place from which these two individuals originated. Additional comment on the origin question was provided by Barnard, Jim Bair, Nick Bonomo, Jamie Meyers, Bill Yule and Mark Szantyr.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia pacifica*) A single bird was reported off Compo Beach in Westport on 19 Oct 2007 (07-13). Following the pattern of several other Pacific Loon records that have not been accepted, this one presented itself under less than ideal conditions. The observer, who was equipped with binoculars but no telescope, had a limited amount of time, and weather conditions deteriorated before others could study the loon, which was not unequivocally relocated. However, it should be noted that a Pacific Loon was reported by another observer from nearby Sherwood Island State Park in Westport the next day. That observer, unaware of the specifics of the 19 Oct sighting, submitted a separate report that was not accepted by ARCC (2007-16, see 14th Report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut, *The Connecticut Warbler*, Vol. 29 No. 2). It was not clear if the reports referred to the same individual, and the report on the Sherwood bird included some features suggestive of Arctic Loon (*Gavia arctica*).

LONG-BILLED CURLEW (*Numenius americanus*) One was reported from Windham Airport in North Windham on 20 July 2006 (09-20). An experienced observer reported the shape and structure of the bird, but distance and poor lighting conditions made a positive identification difficult. It should be noted that the only documented state record of this species, a bird photographed during the period 10-16 Jul 1995, also was from this location. Several 19th Century specimens are mentioned in the literature, but their whereabouts are unknown (Zeranski & Baptist, 1990).

GRAY KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) A bird believed

to be this species was seen, and more importantly photographed, on 6 Sep 2009 at Greenwich Point Park in Greenwich (09-10). The photos were somewhat distant but provided enough detail to determine that the bird lacked the large, blocky head and very heavy bill of Gray Kingbird. Its structure was more suggestive of Eastern Kingbird, and plumage details pointed to a juvenile. The worn juvenile plumage offered some features suggestive of Gray Kingbird, such as lack of an obvious white tail tip and a masked appearance, but the bird's structure, well-illustrated by the photos, did not fit that species. Coincidentally, one of the state's two records for Gray Kingbird occurred at Greenwich Point Park on 17-18 Nov 1992.

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THE 2009-2010 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

By Stephen P. Broker

On first analysis the 2009-2010 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count was fairly lackluster as compared with the counts of recent preceding years. Few eye-popping avian rarities were observed on the northern, mid-state, and coastal CBCs that comprise this year's statewide event. Several species were tallied in 30-year high numbers, but there were four times as many species counted at 30-year record low totals. Among them are some species that have generated regional and/or national concern as they give strong indications that their populations are on steady trends downward: American Black Duck; Canvasback; Redhead; Greater Scaup; Ring-necked Pheasant; Ruffed Grouse; Northern Bobwhite; American Kestrel; Virginia Rail; Red Knot; Wilson's Snipe; American Woodcock; Herring Gull; Great Black-backed Gull; Northern Mockingbird; American Tree Sparrow; Field Sparrow; Eastern Meadowlark; Rusty Blackbird and Evening Grosbeak. In addition, this year marked the lowest participant effort of statewide field observers, feeder watchers, and total observers in the last 30 years.



*Mark Szantyr photo
Northern Mockingbirds have shown a downward trend.*

These matters certainly are genuine sources of concern for the conservation-minded birder and the professional ornithologist, but before we decry the glass as being half empty, let's take stock of the many positive trends that emerge from a more careful look at the last 30 years' results. The very good news for the early winter avifauna of Connecticut includes at least the following: robust numbers of several dabbling ducks and diving ducks; the spectacularly successful reintroduction of Wild Turkey to New England; greatly expanded winter populations of loons; the steady recovery of Great Blue Heron as the incredibly destructive market hunting for the millinery trade fades further from view; the resurgence of many species of hawks, eagles, and falcons, including but by no means limited to Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon; ongoing range expansions of a number of bird species formerly limited to more southern (or more mountainous) distributions; a variety of other active conservation efforts that have been bearing fruit; the confidence that many more avian surprises remain in store for the diligent field observer; a capacity for censusing and disseminating information about our local avifauna that goes far beyond what was possible not all that many years ago.

The discussion that follows is based on a comparison of this year's Christmas Bird Count results with the annual CBC results for the 30-year period 1980-81 through 2009-10. Spreadsheets of data are maintained and updated for each of the individual Christmas Bird Counts taking place wholly or largely in the State of Connecticut. (Seventeen counts submitted results in time for this year's analysis. The results of all statewide counts are available on the National Audubon Society website, www.birdsource.org/). Spreadsheets also are updated each year for regional compilations (Connecticut's northern, mid-state, and coastal counts) as well as for the statewide totals. These regional compilations are not shown in the table published here, but they hold useful information about species distributions in coastal and non-coastal portions of our state and are referred to in the commentary. A total of 22 spreadsheets are updated each year, in addition to the spreadsheet reflecting the current year's results.



*Julian Hough photo
Peregrine Falcons are among several raptorial
species doing well.*

There is some geographic overlap among several of the counts (e.g., New Haven and Stratford-Milford, Oxford and Woodbury-Roxbury), but taken together they represent a significant percentage of the total landmass of Connecticut. New York State claims the Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT CBC, and Rhode Island encompasses the greater share of the Napatree CBC, but tradition has it that Connecticut maintains strong interest in and at least partial "ownership" of these count results. Given the above, and viewing the glass either as half empty or half full, let's consider what has taken place during the 2009-2010 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count.

National Audubon Society defines the Christmas Bird Count period as starting each year on Dec. 14 and ending on Jan. 5. Prior to about ten years ago, the start and end dates were set to include three weekends, but they shifted forward or backward depending on where those weekends fell within the calendar. Long-running tradition has dictated the count day for the majority of Connecticut counts – to be held on the first Saturday or the first Sunday, the last Saturday or the last Sunday, etc. Only Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT has its date cast in stone, to be held on January 1 each year. In past years, a number of counts tended to stack up on the first

Sunday of count period. This year did not follow the typical course. Just five counts were held in Connecticut on the first weekend (Dec. 19-20), while six were held on Sunday of the second weekend (Dec. 27), and six were held on the third weekend (Jan. 1-3).

This year, winter storm warnings were posted for Connecticut for the evening of Dec. 19 and early morning of Dec. 20. Given this concern about the weather and the desire for safe, clear roads, several counts were rescheduled for one or two weeks later. Greenwich-Stamford was the only one of these Sunday counts that ran as scheduled. Compilers must use their best judgment in getting their count under way, knowing that rescheduling a count from its advertised date runs the risk of losing the services of regular field observers and also involves a gamble on better weather to come. As it turned out, Sunday, Dec. 20, proved to be a very birdable day with light snow in the first part of morning and cloudy to sunny conditions in mid- to late morning and afternoon. Those counts that delayed to Sunday, Dec. 27 had to deal with foggy, cloudy weather throughout the day, albeit with seasonable temperatures in the 30s, 40s, and low 50s. Counts rescheduled to Sunday, Jan. 3 found far less favorable conditions, with temperatures plummeting to 7-19 degrees F, light to heavy snow in the morning, and light to heavy snow in the afternoon. Compilers may want to consider delayed starts to their counts under conditions of harsh winter weather (perhaps advising birders to stay inside until 8:00 or 9:00 a.m.), rather than switching dates at the last minute.

A total of 542 field observers, 14 (!) feeder watchers, and 556 total observers participated in the bird counts. This represents a significant fall off from the 1980s and 1990s, when most years saw 900 to 1,000 observers participating in the counts. In keeping with reduced numbers of birders, total party hours of birding have dropped well below the 30-year average for the state. BirdSource does not publish total party miles, so no meaningful statement can be made at this point about distances walked, driven by car, or covered by boat this year. In the modern day when compilers submit count

results on-line and National Audubon publishes them on BirdSource, it has become less clear just how many feeder watchers are participating in counts. Also, feeder watchers have proven less likely to pay the participant fee, further diminishing recognition of their contributions. It is hard to believe that only 14 feeder watchers were active on this year's statewide count. Regardless, we need to do a better job of attracting birders to future Christmas Bird Counts, both in the field and at feeders. One hopes that the reduced numbers of participants over the last ten years do not reflect a Connecticut State birding population where aging up outpaces recruitment of new, enthusiastic, young birders.

This, thank goodness, completes the "glass half empty" part of the analysis. Let's now view the glass as half full or mostly full or filled to the overflowing.

Hartford led the northern counts by tallying 91 count day species and continued its dominance by fielding more than 100 participants. The five northern counts combined to record 102 count day species and three count week species (Greater Scaup at Storrs, Northern Goshawk and Northern Shrike at Litchfield Hills). Woodbury-Roxbury led the five mid-state counts with 85 count day species. The combined mid-state total was 99 count day species plus one count week species (American Woodcock at Woodbury-Roxbury). Along the coast, New Haven had 126 count day species, followed by 117 at Greenwich-Stamford, 115 at Old Lyme-Saybrook, and 114 at New London. The coastal total was 149 count day species (third lowest in 30 years) and one count week species (Red-necked Grebe at Greenwich-Stamford). Throughout the state, 155 count day species and 2 count week species (Red-necked Grebe, Northern Shrike) were observed. The record high statewide species count is 177 count day species in 2007-08.

Napatree, R.I. recorded 117 species on count day, a solid total but well short of its count circle record 130 species in 2007-08. Napatree's position on the coast in Block Island Sound and its greater proximity to the Atlantic Ocean produce a diverse

avifauna, portions of which differ significantly from Connecticut's coastal counts within Long Island Sound. (Consider the numbers of Common Eider, Black Scoter, Northern Gannet, and Razorbill - in most years - that Napatree records.) This justifies giving Napatree a column of data separate from the other counts and not added into the "state total" for Connecticut. When Napatree holds its tenth Christmas Bird Count two years from now, it may make more sense to recalculate the state totals and include it fully in the comparison with all other counts occurring wholly or partly in Connecticut.

Best bird honors for this year go to Black-legged Kittiwake, as four were seen on the New London count. This is just the third time that this species has been recorded on a Connecticut CBC (although Napatree has recorded it nearly every year). The first occurrence was count week in 1992-93 from a boat offshore of New Haven, and the second was a count day bird seen in 1994-95 at Old Lyme-Saybrook. Other noteworthy species this year were Snowy Egret at New Haven, Green Heron at Old Lyme-Saybrook, and two Boat-tailed Grackles at Stratford-Milford. Boat-tailed Grackle at Lordship Marshes in Stratford was first recorded in 1985-86. This species of Atlantic and Gulf Coast distribution has been seen on six of the last eight Stratford-Milford CBCs, with a high count of 35 last year. It is unique to New England in its presence at Lordship.

The one new species appearing this year in Connecticut is Muscovy Duck at Old Lyme-Saybrook. This naked-faced dabbling duck is native to Mexico, Central America, and South America, and it is found as a feral or domesticated bird in most U.S. states. As such, it joins the Connecticut CBC curiosity list of such exotic, introduced birds as Chukar, Budgerigar, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Black-hooded Parakeet, and Red-crested Cardinal (Brazilian Cardinal).

Rarities occurring on northern counts consisted of a single Black Scoter, American Woodcock (count week), and a Dickcissel, all at Hartford. The one mid-state rarity was a

Cackling Goose at Woodbury-Roxbury, while nine Northern Bobwhite at Oxford also deserve mention, although likely of released origin. There has been only one other sighting of bobwhite quail on a Connecticut CBC in the last ten years - three birds seen at Storrs in 2003-04. Also noteworthy was a Lesser Black-backed Gull at Woodbury-Roxbury. Coastal counts lacked any rarities (birds seen six or fewer times in the last 30 years), but the more noteworthy species included Greater White-fronted Goose at New Haven, three Tundra Swans at Old Lyme-Saybrook, Snowy Egret at New Haven, Green Heron at Old Lyme-Saybrook, and the Boat-tailed Grackles at Stratford-Milford. From the perspective of individual counts, Turkey Vulture was a new count day bird for Barkhamsted, Dickcissel was new for Hartford's 30-year list, Storrs had a good number of rarities (shown in the table), Oxford's Northern Bobwhite have been noted, Pawling had a Vesper Sparrow, New London had its Black-legged Kittiwakes and Old Lyme-Saybrook its Muscovy Duck, and Napatree added Orange-crowned Warbler and Clay-colored Sparrow to its eight year all-time list.

The bird species occurring on Connecticut's statewide Christmas Bird Counts vary considerably from year to year, with some species counted virtually every year, other species in most years, and still others with some degree of infrequency or rarity. The complete list of species seen for the 30-year period beginning in 1980-81 consists of 260 count day spe-



Bruce Finnan photo
 Stratford-Milford found the only Boat-tailed
 Grackles.

cies and nine additional count week species. The rarest of the rare during this time period, those species never recorded on count day but seen either three days before or three days after a count are: American White Pelican; Gyrfalcon; Purple Gallinule; Piping Plover; Budgerigar; Western Kingbird; Cave Swallow; Varied Thrush; Indigo Bunting. During the 2008-09 Christmas Bird Count, four species were added to the statewide list. Two Dovekies were observed that year on the New London CBC, White-winged Dove was recorded at New Haven, Black-hooded Parakeet got out of the cage to brighten Oxford's count, and New Haven also boasted Cave Swallow during the count period. This year's count lacked the glamour of the previous year (with apologies to Muscovy Duck), and it was characterized more by those species occurring in particularly high or low totals.

New Thirty-Year High Counts

Four species and one subspecies occurred at record 30-year high totals in 2009-10. The petite and handsome diving duck Bufflehead failed to be observed on northern or mid-state counts, but its numbers swelled along the coast to produce a new statewide high total. There is no clear trend of increase in this species' numbers, however. As noted previously, Black-legged Kittiwake has been a rarity on Connecticut's CBCs, and four spotted in the waters of New London's count circle are the first occurrence of multiple individuals on the statewide count. But, the Connecticut count this year is best characterized by record-breaking totals of two species throughout the state. The first is American Robin, which dazzled birders with its large flocks, seen mid-state and to a lesser extent along the coast. Woodbury-Roxbury tallied 12,000 robins on its count, closely followed by the more than 10,000 robins seen at Quinnipiac Valley. Three coastal counts also had record high numbers of robins. This is a species that varies considerably in numbers from year to year, much as do blackbirds, grackles, and cowbirds. The other winter favorite appearing in remarkably high numbers this year was White-throated Sparrow. This bird was distributed evenly through the state, and seven counts recorded it at record high

levels. White-throated Sparrow exceeded all expectations on northern, mid-state, coastal, and statewide aggregate counts, breaking its high total of just two years ago by 28%. The simplest description of the 2009-10 CBC is "lots of robins and white-throats". Finally, a new high of 10 Savannah 'Ipswich' Sparrows were identified at their favored coastal sites in Old Lyme-Saybrook and Stratford-Milford.

Avian species that occurred in near-record high totals span the full taxonomic range. Among the anseriforms, Wood Duck, Common Eider, and Surf Scoter were plentiful and achieved second highest totals in 30 years. Field observers scoping for birds at Long Island Sound found Common Loons to be fairly abundant, while Northern Gannets sighted in Greenwich-Stamford and Old Lyme-Saybrook count circles gave further evidence of a significant increase in their numbers over the winter waters of the Sound. Each of our two vulture species was seen in relatively high numbers, and all indications are that Black Vulture will continue to expand into the state as a breeding and wintering species. Red-shouldered Hawk continues its more robust numbers of the last 15 years. Peregrine Falcon is one of our great conservation success stories, and the last five years have seen double digits of peregrines on Connecticut counts. This reflects a slow but steady expansion of nesting pairs in the state and an increase in birds, many of which are color-banded, coming in from nearby states to seek out territory and find a mate. The dating game gains in popularity.

Few sandpipers appeared in high numbers this year. Sand-erling is about the only exception. Red-bellied Woodpeckers continue to maintain high numbers, but the woodpecker of special note this year was Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Does the apparent expansion of their winter range in the last several years provide further avian evidence of a warming climate, or is it just a blip on the radar screen? This year they were accompanied by good numbers of Pileated Woodpeckers. Common Raven also appeared on the high side, as did American Pipit. The robins and White-throated Sparrows were joined by impressive numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos, yet

another winter species that graced our state. Red-winged Blackbird, Rusty Blackbird, and Common Grackle were additional widely distributed flocking species.

New Thirty-Year Low Counts

Nineteen species were counted in record low totals, and an additional 40 species occurred in near-record low or generally low numbers. Ring-necked Pheasant needs a shot in the arm in order to remain a part of our avifauna. Where are the pheasant farms and pheasant hunters in this time of need? Ruffed Grouse continues to approach early winter oblivion, with a single bird being counted at Litchfield Hills this year. It staggers the mind to recall that we were observing more than 200 grouse statewide in the early 1980s. Their numbers have been reduced with relentless steadiness since then, apparently due to a combination of habitat loss, increased predation pressure, and competition. We are the poorer for this decline. Purple Sandpiper was in short supply this year, but this may be due in part to the unfavorable weather impeding a careful search of offshore rocky outcrops in the Sound. A skimpy total of four American Woodcock joined the statewide list.

Several species had surprisingly depressed numbers this early winter, including Mourning Dove, Great Horned Owl, and Black-capped Chickadee. These are best regarded as temporary aberrations. But, Northern Mockingbird continues to give cause for concern, as do the scrubland and grassland species Field Sparrow and Eastern Meadowlark. It's interesting to observe that two of our more ubiquitously occurring introduced species, European Starling and House Sparrow, appear to have their populations contracting to less overwhelming size. Starlings still account for nearly 10% of all individual birds counted on the Connecticut CBC, but let's not forget that a summation of 30 years of CBC data shows that starlings make up 27% of all birds seen. They have plummeted at steady pace from 230,000 birds in 1982-83 to a "mere" 31,000 birds this year. House Sparrow totals do not reflect such a dramatic shift in fortunes, but this year there

were half as many as were seen in 1981-82. The "balance of nature" may be more fiction than fact, but a long-term view of how these and other exotic species, such as Mute Swan, Monk Parakeet, continue to fare should be taken.

The list of birds that approached record low numbers is extensive – more than 60 species by my count – and it includes various ducks, gallinaceous birds, sandpipers, owls, wrens, and sparrows. We had our irruption of Pine Grosbeaks in 2007-08 (186 birds statewide) and Pine Siskins in 2008-09 (actually peaking in the latter part of count period and into January). This was not the year of the winter finch. The reader is encouraged to mine the statewide data further for information about our early winter avifauna.

Thanks go to all the state compilers, many serving in this role year after year, for coordinating the latest edition of the Christmas Bird Count. Chris Loscalzo deserves special recognition for posting the results of the New Haven count as soon as the BirdSource website was opened for receiving count data, within a week of this count's completion and before the New Year arrived! Thanks go also to the birders who dealt with snow, fog, temperature swings, and the other vagaries of winter to conduct this annual celebration of our avian bounty.



*Fran Zygmunt photo
Pileated Woodpeckers put in a good showing in 2009-10.*

SPECIES	Northern Counts					Mid-State Counts					Coastal Counts					State Total	RI/CT NA	Grand Total		
	BA	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM				WE	
Greater White-fronted Goose																	1		1	
Snow Goose			1								18	1			1		21		21	
Brant										613	1543	118	8	268	158	2708	13	2721		
Cackling Goose																	1		1	
Canada Goose	210	6984	548	1064	1910	239	12311	2159	118	4500	8281	3809	2118	615	1473	1381	47720	2860	50580	
Mute Swan		19	12	6	7	3	40	130	32	8	116	119	249	261	40	36	1078	229	1307	
Tundra Swan																	3		3	
Muscovy Duck																	1		1	
Wood Duck	B	8						1	2		40	59	20	9	2	7	156	1	157	
Gadwall		1									1	89	137	2	4	142	30	406	2	408
Eurasian Wigeon											1						1		1	
American Wigeon		2									69	119	28		182	51	453		453	
American Black Duck	67	289	36	9	5	4	68	10	40	128	671	655	451	318	903	395	4049	1817	5866	
Mallard	428	953	342	71	538	103	398	307	224	650	1422	1647	1437	592	1298	521	10931	1195	12126	
Mallard Hybrid		3					5					12		1	2	2	25		25	
Northern Pintail		1								1	1			1	2	2	6	3	9	
Green-winged Teal (Amer.)		2						1			1	9		3	23	2	42	2	44	
Canvasback											5	1	21		21		48		48	
Redhead												1	1				2		2	
Ring-necked Duck	6		43	8		6	8	7		1	28	57	94	14	30	18	320	4	324	
Greater Scaup					CW						7	1069	3	42	205	8	1334	2	1336	
Lesser Scaup			4								2	18	6	190	19	3	245		245	
scaup, sp.															53		53		53	
Common Eider													129	15			144		568	
Surf Scoter											6	75	31	305	2	419	130		549	
White-winged Scoter											10	2	4	3	36	2	57		80	
Black Scoter												1	7	1			11		43	
scoter, species											3				50		53		53	
Long-tailed Duck											205	18	14	12	275	498	1022	34	1056	
Bufflehead											938	155	307	67	88	329	1884	281	2165	
Common Goldeneye	1										218	442	328	78	385	495	1947	105	2052	
Hooded Merganser	43	28	4	5		3	55	49	15	24	277	221	607	40	93	121	1585	147	1732	
Common Merganser	97	41	14	15	56	342	200	40	10	161	729	118	19	65	92	7	2006	59	2065	
Red-breasted Merganser											469	184	478	77	299	109	1616	276	1892	
Ruddy Duck								5			58	2	3	2		2	85	1	86	
Duck, sp.												220					220		220	
Diving Duck, sp.															143		143		143	
Ring-necked Pheasant	1	3	1			1		3		3		1				0	13		13	

Ruffed Grouse			1													1			
Wild Turkey	55	49	79	29	96		76	44	8	14	28	101	37	42	53	21	732	41	773
Northern Bobwhite						2											9		9
Red-throated Loon											75	14	12	11	52	7	171	25	196
Common Loon											43	22	84	19	25	17	210	87	297
Pied-billed Grebe				1							6	1	4	1	1	1	15	1	16
Horned Grebe											14	2	7		10	13	46	20	66
Red-necked Grebe											CW						CW		CW
Northern Gannet											10		2	15	CW		27	463	490
Double-crested Cormorant									1		12	4	23	6	5		51	1	52
Great Cormorant								1	4		78	14	14	18	14	4	147	28	175
Great Blue Heron	1	22	1	CW		1	2	7	1	14	40	23	9	17	13	6	157	30	187
Great Egret												1			CW		1		1
Snowy Egret												1					1		1
Green Heron														1			1		1
Black-crowned Night-Heron													1	2		1	3		7
Black Vulture		3			6	7	2			19	18	1	49		CW	9	114	1	115
Turkey Vulture	1	27			73	8					147	6	114	18	14	43	451	22	473
Osprey											1						1		1
Bald Eagle	5	15	4	1	1	6	9	2	1	4	4	6	4	10	CW	2	74		74
Northern Harrier		4		CW	1		1			2	1	10	6	16	13	0	54	6	60
Sharp-shinned Hawk	4	11	5		2		8	2	2	7	17	10	9	8	5	8	98	5	103
Cooper's Hawk	2	11	3	3	4	1	10	6		6	12	13	19	14	8	3	115	6	121
Northern Goshawk			CW				1					1					2		2
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	6	1		4	7	6	2	3	10	2	6	20	10	3	2	85	2	87
Red-tailed Hawk	29	130	18	23	29	11	90	34	8	61	111	63	48	26	29	25	735	6	741
Rough-legged Hawk				1			1					1			1		4	1	5
American Kestrel										1	1	1	1	1	1	3	10	1	11
Merlin	CW	1									3	4	1		2		14	2	16
Peregrine Falcon		2					1	2			3	3	4	2	3	1	18		18
Clapper Rail												1		1	2		4		4
Virginia Rail														4			5		6
American Coot			1								4	7	6		8	1	27		27
Black-bellied Plover											12		19		1	6	38	1	39
Killdeer											14	5		3	20	7	49	5	54
Greater Yellowlegs												2			1		3		3
Ruddy Turnstone											52	6	9	18		51	136		136
Sanderling												108	3	158	286	2	557	18	575
Purple Sandpiper											8	2	16	14	4	1	45	9	54
Dunlin													12	233	381	121	747	52	799
Wilson's Snipe						2						1					3		3

SPECIES	Northern Counts					Mid-State Counts					Coastal Counts					State Total	RI/CT NA	Grand Total	
	BA	HA	LH	LS	ST	OX	PA	QV	SR	WR	GS	NH	NL	OL	SM				WE
American Woodcock		1								CW	2	1					4	2	6
Bonaparte's Gull											11	4	2	1		5	23	7	30
Ring-billed Gull	738	640	14	5	78	236	230	594	65	310	1669	2885	460	596	3036	1070	12626	59	12685
Herring Gull	15	377	2		72	86	12	24	19	39	1656	1555	3874	1218	3009	3121	15079	807	15886
Iceland Gull		3									1		3	1	2	1	11	1	12
Lesser Black-backed Gull		1								1	CW					1	4	2	6
Great Black-backed Gull	1	172			1	19	2	7	4	56	156	148	217	88	122	89	1082	359	1441
Black-legged Kittiwake													4				4	2	6
Dovekie													5				0	1	1
Razorbill													5				5	1	6
Rock Pigeon	274	1425	110	53	271	177	101	133	126	177	541	1366	315	218	777	490	6554	72	6626
Mourning Dove	262	973	171	102	149	64	282	161	78	218	721	642	292	221	187	93	4616	233	4849
Monk Parakeet											26	119	20	196	16		377		377
Barn Owl												1					1		1
Eastern Screech-Owl	1	28	4	1	9	1	18	0	2	27	3	21	7	5	3	1	131		131
Great Horned Owl	1	3	1	1	4		7	0	0	13	6	8	3	3	1	3	54	2	56
Barred Owl	4	5	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	9	1	CW	1		1	1	33		33
Long-eared Owl										2					1		5		5
Short-eared Owl														1			1		1
Northern Saw-whet Owl	1		2				2			2	1		2				10	3	13
Belted Kingfisher	1	16	2	3	2	1	7	4	2	3	13	23	7	15	17	3	119	10	129
Red-headed Woodpecker														1			1		1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	55	169	51	23	45	34	82	44	38	134	169	93	42	44	27	48	1098	12	1110
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	7	13	10	3	4	7	33	2	1	28	18	21	CW	11	5	5	163	3	166
Downy Woodpecker	117	253	147	55	92	64	180	54	69	184	201	141	74	57	51	49	1788	33	1821
Hairy Woodpecker	29	56	32	7	16	7	32	6	8	41	37	31	7	3	6	11	329	2	331
Northern Flicker	10	73	8	5	17	10	41	28	11	43	29	58	52	33	22	14	457	40	497
Pileated Woodpecker	10	4	7	5	3		33	3	3	11	6	1		4	CW	1	91		91
Eastern Phoebe							1					1		1	2		5		5
Northern Shrike			CW														CW	1	1
Blue Jay	518	672	337	127	295	206	510	295	244	716	516	586	236	366	182	128	5934	104	6038
American Crow	540	15000	613	457	280	312	835	446	246	2500	2401	1897	450	318	324	139	26758	47	26805
Fish Crow		5				3	3	2		4	6	74	1	3	36	5	142	1	143
Common Raven	35		5	2	1	1	16			5	1	7	1	3	1		78		78
Horned Lark		85	49	264	297			51		110	146	32	46	42	48	21	1191	8	1199
Black-capped Chickadee	772	374	726	192	482	245	563	169	261	793	440	270	403	312	133	104	6239	242	6481
Tufted Titmouse	376	304	347	87	283	209	317	138	208	511	430	223	232	246	128	88	4127	111	4238
Red-breasted Nuthatch	12	10	11	1	1	14	4			8	6	14	8		CW		89	2	91

White-breasted Nuthatch	166	168	138	40	111	39	140	42	84	194	159	73	79	70	28	38	1569	33	1602
Brown Creeper	25	17	12		8	10	13	6	1	8	15	13	6	4	2	CW	140	7	147
Carolina Wren	43	66	9	1	15	14	58	23	28	34	101	56	72	62	89	24	695	77	772
Winter Wren	3	4	1			1	6			7	11	7	2	1	1	2	46	10	56
Marsh Wren												1		1			2	8	10
Golden-crowned Kinglet	58	39	15	8	68	26	30	6	19	63	10	32	61	23	5	9	472	42	514
Ruby-crowned Kinglet		6						1	2	1	5	4	5	2		2	28	13	41
Eastern Bluebird	85	61	70	13	82	17	63	29	75	179	31	25	43	106	5	29	913	33	946
Hermit Thrush	3	8	6		3	3	8		2	28	9	15	25	4	1	CW	115	15	130
American Robin	372	1657	619	240	309	1046	1085	10473	294	12000	2933	4632	1786	2670	1129	373	41618	441	42059
Gray Catbird		4	2			3	4	8	1	9	13	14	25	9	6	6	104	27	131
Northern Mockingbird	14	54	3	1	10	13	39	49	6	33	75	65	46	51	61	24	544	49	593
Brown Thrasher											1	2	4	2		3	12	6	18
European Starling	651	7046	601	370	586	956	1615	1640	306	2100	2551	5203	2649	2890	1543	645	31352	1376	32728
American Pipit		7			6			2			57	14	4	4	2	2	98	1	99
Cedar Waxwing	303	34	123	56	191	9	29	57	66	708	254	137	146	103	9	139	2364	23	2387
Orange-crowned Warbler																	0	1	1
Yellow-rumped Warbler		11				4	4	9		23	12	4	73	83	4	6	233	250	483
Palm Warbler												1					1	0	1
Yellow-breasted Chat																	0	1	1
Eastern Towhee	4			1		1	1		3	5	7	12	17	14	2	CW	67	36	103
American Tree Sparrow	51	630	267	92	111	16	221	30	8	148	56	151	29	38	118	46	2012	46	2058
Chipping Sparrow		3				1				2	2	23				1	32	1	33
Clay-colored Sparrow																	0	1	1
Field Sparrow		4		2		1	2	2	14	1	10	25	32	6	16	28	143	13	156
Vesper Sparrow		7				1	1										4	4	4
Savannah Sparrow		104		8			12	17		6	10	16	3	8	28	6	218	20	238
Savannah 'Ipswich' Sparrow														5	5		10	10	10
Nelson's Sparrow																	0	2	2
Saltmarsh Sparrow																	0	1	1
Fox Sparrow	1	6	1			5		1	1	5	21	19	10	4	3	12	89	26	115
Song Sparrow	71	484	51	10	78	86	141	93	42	178	326	435	205	92	249	125	2666	209	2875
Swamp Sparrow	4	13	6		3	1	18	0	1	13	10	25	4	8	10	3	119	11	130
White-throated Sparrow	701	1352	870	181	337	557	853	529	205	1402	1868	1835	680	564	364	480	12778	515	13293
White-crowned Sparrow		17			4		3			12	1	7					44		44
Dark-eyed Junco	1911	1728	2258	680	1046	606	770	403	267	1722	2583	866	405	434	221	631	16531	269	16800
Lapland Longspur										2			8	1	1		12		12
Snow Bunting		4	83	14	1	1					34	9	19	9	6	29	209	CW	209
Northern Cardinal	236	402	288	53	137	145	226	122	105	280	357	336	319	158	144	112	3470	168	3638
Dickcissel		1															1		1
Red-winged Blackbird	120	6794	122	11	30	148	493	3		175	842	2115	716	136	54	67	11826	78	11904

SPECIES	Northern Counts					Mid-State Counts					Coastal Counts						State Total	RI/CT 12/27	Grand Total
	BA 12/27	HA 12/19	LH 01/10	LS 01/03	ST 12/19	OX 01/03	PA 01/01	QV 12/27	SR 12/27	WR 12/19	GS 12/20	NH 12/19	NL 01/02	OL 12/27	SM 12/27	WE 12/20			
Eastern Meadowlark		3				2			3		16	89	4	4	1	2	1	5	6
Rusty Blackbird																	123	12	135
Common Grackle	14	16010	4			21	338	56	3	96	8896	4038	1994	5	849	52	32376	166	32542
Boat-tailed Grackle														2			2		2
Brown-headed Cowbird	13	295	22	60	27		449	80		20	40	192	172	95	8	2	1475	73	1548
Baltimore Oriole		1										3					4		4
Purple Finch	11	3	20	5	4				1	4	8	10	1	5		2	74	6	80
House Finch	144	293	130	25	127	24	189	112	27	226	308	361	127	105	130	44	2372	93	2465
Pine Siskin		5	2	1													8		8
American Goldfinch	211	384	412	107	190	95	229	64	85	190	219	296	128	78	67	91	2846	74	2920
House Sparrow	353	929	319	35	155	147	216	139	147	285	676	614	754	370	794	171	6104	310	6414
TOTALS																			
Individuals	10358	67940	10222	4635	8786	6448	23873	18966	3647	31767	46747	43026	24440	15168	21608	13294	350925	15200	366125
Count Day Species	65	91	69	56	64	67	76	65	59	85	117	126	114	115	109	103	155	117	162
Count Week Species	1	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	5	4	2	1	1
Field Observers	24	102	51	15	23	19	37	19	21	33	60	51	38	32	22	27	574	18	592
Feeder Watchers	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	14	1	15
Total Observers	32	102	51	15	23	19	37	19	21	36	60	51	38	32	22	30	588	19	607
Party Hours	88	218	108.75	49.5	70	71.5	188	68.75	91	121	179	167	116	63	96	64.5	1760	74	1834
Party Miles	518	576				470.5			331	644				343		314.5	3197	231	3428

Northern Counts

BA = Barkhamsted
 HA = Hartford
 LH = Litchfield Hills
 LS = Lakeville-Sharon
 St = Storrs

Mid-State Counts

OX = Oxford
 PA = Pawling, NY/Hidden V
 QV = Quinnipiac Valley
 SR = Salmon River
 WR = Woodbury-Roxbury

Coastal Counts

GS = Greenwich-Stamford
 NH = New Haven
 NL = New London
 OL = Old Lyme-Saybrook
 SM = Stratford-Milford
 WE = Westport
 NA = Napatree, RI/CT

Legend

CW Count Period
 0 First time not seen in 30 years
 XX Rare Species
 XX New 30 Year High Count
 XX New 30 Year Low Count
 XX New Species for Count

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Winter, Dec 1, 2009, through February 28, 2010

By Greg Hanisek

For a winter without northern finches and with only a modest showing by northern raptors, winter 2009-10 still offered plenty to keep birders interested. Waterfowl and ferry trips provided plenty of opportunities. Species on the upswing, such as Sandhill Cranes and Clay-colored Sparrows, made good showings, and American White Pelicans made a dramatic passage through the state. There was a nice mix of rarities as well, especially if you were the proprietor of a certain feeder in Sterling.

Single **Greater White-fronted Geese** were in Ellington on Dec. 2 (CEk), in North Haven on Dec. 19 (FG) and at Broad Brook Pond in East Windsor throughout January (MBa et al.). A flock of 42 Snow Geese, including four blue morphs, were on the marsh at Milford Point briefly on Dec. 9 (BP). A flock of 14 Brant at Pistapaug Pond in Wallingford on Dec. 17 was a large number to be seen on the ground inland (MM). A "**Black**" Brant found Jan. 24 at Harkness Memorial State Park, Waterford, was a second state record for this western subspecies (NB, PR). It was present to at least Jan. 30. Six **Cackling Geese** for the season comprised a flyover with Canada Geese Dec 13 in Stratford (FM); one with Canadas on the Housatonic River in New Milford on Dec. 19 (GH, DT); two at Broad Brook Pond in East Windsor on Jan 2 (MBa); one at Mackenzie Reservoir in Wallingford on Jan. 4 (MBa); and one at Holly Pond, Stamford, on Feb. 9 (FM).

Two Tundra Swans flew west past Shippan Point, Stamford, on Dec. 7 (BI, JD). Other reports were of five in flight at Station 43, South Windsor, on Dec 12 (RBe); two on the Black Hall River and other locations in Old Lyme Dec. 23-26 with

one present to at least Dec. 30 (HG et al.); two in Stonington on Dec. 30 (CA); and one in Coventry on Feb. 28 (PW). An unusual mid-winter concentration of 10 Wood Ducks was in East Rock Park, New Haven, on Jan. 9 (PA, SZ). The state DEP's annual helicopter survey of wintering waterfowl reported that the Mallard and Black Duck counts were the highest in 15 years. American Wigeon and Gadwall were above their five-year averages. Three Eurasian Wigeon for the season were reported. A Mallard-Northern Pintail hybrid was on the Naugatuck River in Waterbury in early January (BDe), and possibly the same bird was seen Feb. 27 at Wooster Park Pond in Stratford (FM). The only Northern Shoveler report came from Wooster Park Pond on Dec.

11 (FM). Scattered four-digit rafts of Greater Scaup in the western end of the Sound included 4,000 off the West Haven boat ramp on Jan. 27 (GH). Captain's Cove Marina in Bridgeport held c 200 Lesser Scaup on Feb. 13 (LT).

An immature male King Eider wintered at Hammonasset Beach State Park (hereafter HBSP), offering viewing opportunities to many observers. In what was perhaps a breakthrough season for Common Eider, 100+ were counted from Waterford to Stonington on Dec. 15 (NB), and 200 were at three Stonington locations Jan. 8 (DP). Many double-figure reports were also received as numbers finally have begun to burgeon in Long Island Sound, primarily in the eastern end. A male



This apparent Mallard X Northern Pintail hybrid visited Wooster Park Pond in Stratford.

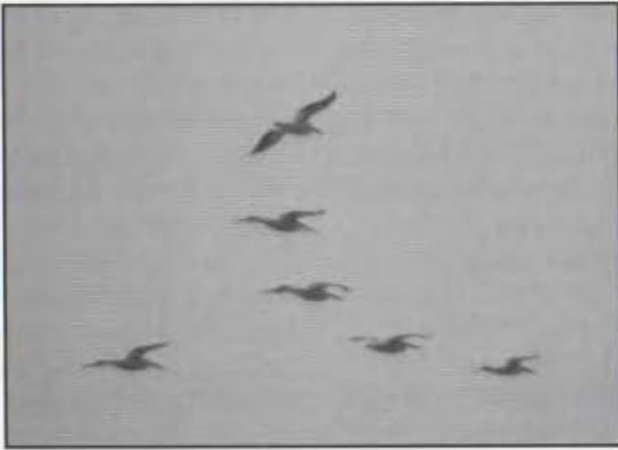
Frank Mantlik photo

Harlequin Duck was an unusual winterer inland on the Farmington River in Farmington after its discovery there Jan. 12 (SJ et al.). It was probably the most popular bird of the season. Reports of sightings by 38 birders were posted on the CTBirds listserv through at least Feb. 25, so it's likely more than double that number saw this handsome waterfowl. A Jan. 1 boat survey of the Norwalk Islands produced 4200 White-winged Scoters, 1000 Long-tailed Ducks and 190 Buffleheads (LF). Two Long-tailed Ducks were inland at Bristol Reservoir No. 7 on Dec. 5 (PCa). A high count of 790 Common Goldeneyes was at Penfield Reef, Fairfield, on Jan. 14 (JRa). Single **Barrow's Goldeneyes** were at Seaside Park, Bridgeport, on Jan. 1 (PM) and at Long Beach, Stratford, on Jan. 16 (BA). Pistapaug Reservoir in Wallingford held 100 Ruddy Ducks on Dec. 2 (MM).

Observers logged seven reports of Ruffed Grouse. This species, known for cyclical ups and downs, seems to be generating more reports in the past few years but remains drastically reduced from levels of 20 years ago.

A field on Weigold Road in Torrington held 105 Turkeys in three flocks on Feb. 21 (RBe). The only Red-necked Grebe reports were singles on Dec. 8 at Barkhamsted Reservoir (PCa) and Jan. 11-17 at Shippan Point, Stamford (PDU). A seasonal highlight was discovery of an **Eared Grebe** on Feb. 12 at Seaside Park, Bridgeport (KE, BB et al.). It was cooperative for birders who went to the park that day but could not be relocated. A **Northern Fulmar**, extremely rare in state waters, followed a fishing trawler to the outer breakwater in Stonington Harbor on Dec. 6 (PR). It was accompanied by 70 Northern Gannets and hundreds of gulls.

Eight **American White Pelicans** that were spotted earlier in Maine and then Rhode Island were seen in Connecticut as follows on Dec. 6: HBSP at 1:35 p.m. (NB); West Haven at 2:36 p.m. (JHo) and Stratford Point at 3:10 p.m. (SK et al.). NB stationed himself at HBSP in an effort to see them and quickly notified the others when he did. Using Google Earth, he timed them at a fairly steady 18 mph.



Nick Bonomo photo
These are six of the flock of eight American White Pelicans that made a well-documented passage through the state.

In addition, two were seen flying southwest along the Branford coast on the same day, but at 7 a.m., making them different birds (JG). It is worth noting that an observer on Dec. 11 saw a flock of about 10 large birds flying by Long Beach in Stratford. Because of difficult lighting conditions, he was hesitant to make a positive identification, but his description of them - big white large-headed birds with black primaries, flying in synchronized V-formation with dipping and occasional soaring - leaves little doubt that they were American White Pelicans (CN).

Am immature Great Cor-

morant was far inland on the Farmington River at Collinsville on Jan. 20-22 (SB et al.). In addition to a few of the usual December lingerers, a Great Egret was in Norwalk on Feb. 14 (NH). Cattle Egrets are now somewhat regular in November, so one on Dec. 4 at HBSP was just a bit late (JLi, PM). Totally unexpected was a **Glossy Ibis** found late in the afternoon of Jan. 26 at Greenwich Point (TJ); it was photographed but not seen thereafter.

At what may be the state's largest winter vulture roost, up to 90 Turkey Vultures, including a leucistic one, and seven Black Vultures soared over Williman-

tic on Dec. 19 (BH). Another leucistic Turkey Vulture was in Waterford on Jan. 19 (GW). The New London CBC recorded 49 Black Vultures (BDw). Noteworthy flocks included 17 in New Milford on Jan. 14 (AD) and 13 in Woodbridge on Jan. 8 (CLO). A late Osprey was found on Dec. 20 on the New Haven CBC, no longer a startling occurrence as this species appears to be lingering regularly into early winter. More unexpected was an anomalous record, probably related to storms moving from south to north at the time, in which two experienced observers saw a single Osprey on consecutive days, Feb. 11-12, along the Housatonic River in Derby (KE, BB). A dark morph

Red-tailed Hawk was seen several times over the course of the winter in the Cheshire-Meriden area (PDU et al.). There were about 15 reports statewide of Rough-legged Hawks. An immature Golden Eagle was at a traditional wintering spot on the lower Connecticut River in Chester on Feb. 13 (JCn).

A Clapper Rail was at Otter Cove, Old Saybrook, on Jan. 23 (JOG). A Virginia Rail at Birch Plain Creek marsh in Groton was at a spot that has produced this species for 20 consecutive years (PR). **Sandhill Crane** numbers continue to increase: three northbound flyovers in North Haven on Dec. 3 (JHo); two flyovers in Stamford on



Two Long-billed Dowitchers were a good December find at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.

John Pfitzner photo



AJ Hand photo

This Spotted Sandpiper lingered unusually late at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport.

Dec. 5 (ACo); and four flyovers at HBSP on Dec. 13 (TG et al.). One found in a field in Durham on Jan. 18 stayed just three days thereafter (JLu), but local residents said it had been present about a month.

A late Spotted Sandpiper, first reported in late November, remained at Burying Hill Beach, Westport, to at least Dec. 25 (ER, TG). A "western" Willet found Jan. 2 at Johnson's Creek, Bridgeport, stayed through the winter (GH et al.). There's one other record of a wintering bird and one record of a bird staying at least into January. Two Long-billed Dowitchers, a species that has occasionally lingered deep into

winter, were photographed on Dec. 28 in a snowmelt pool at HBSP (JP). American Woodcocks lingered to at least Dec. 19 at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge in Stratford (CB) and on the Hartford CBC (JK). One was at Stony Creek, Branford, on Dec. 21 (CW), another was in Noank on Jan. 14 (EE) and one appeared in a driveway in Woodbury during the last week in January (fide AD). The appearance of three in a Stratford yard on Feb. 12 (SK) forces the question suggested by the other reports: Do we have a regular but inconspicuous wintering population, or are some birds already moving back into the state by the first part of February?

The only Black-headed Gull report came from Holly Pond, Stamford, on Dec. 31 (BV). Iceland Gull continues to winter in good numbers, with about 25 reported for the season. This included one, now an adult, wintering at Compo Beach in Westport for the sixth consecutive year (FM). There were 11 reports of Lesser Black-backed Gulls for the season, as well as a good seasonal total of seven Glaucous Gulls. A second-cycle Glaucous Gull was very reliable at Long Beach, Stratford, where presumably the same one had been equally reliable a year earlier as a first-cycle bird (FM et al.) **Black-legged Kittiwakes** provided more opportunities than usual for observation in state waters. On Dec.

27 in the New London area, two were seen from the New London-Orient Point, N.Y., ferry, and one was seen from shore (JD, PDU). Four were seen from the ferry on Jan. 2 (FM, SZ), and one was seen on the ferry route on Feb. 27 (NB, et al.). A "wrecked" **Dovekie** found by a dog on a New Canaan street on Jan. 25 was taken into care but did not survive (MSa). Nine Razorbills were seen in the New London area on Dec. 27, two from the ferry and seven flying by Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (JD, PDU). The ferry produced five each on Jan. 2 (FM, SZ) and Jan. 11 (GH et al.), and two on Jan. 30 (BA, RMa). One was off Shippan Point, Stamford, on Jan. 17 (PDU).

A Barn Owl on the New



Frank Mantlik photo
The New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry
offered rare opportunities to see Black-
legged Kittiwakes in Connecticut waters.
This one appeared on Jan. 2.

Haven CBC was unique this season. A Snowy Owl found on Dec 31 at Milford Point was seen there until Jan. 2 (TW et al.). One at Long Beach, Stratford, on Jan 4 (JZ, AH) was very likely the same bird. There were six Short-eared Owl reports for the season. An immature Red-headed Woodpecker found in November at Northwest Park in Windsor stayed through the winter and was seen by many. An adult feeder visitor was noted on Feb. 26 in Weston (JS). The latest reports of Eastern Phoebes were from Amston on Jan. 14 (CEk), from New Hartford on Jan. 24-25 (BB et al.) and from Hebron on Feb. 8 (AP). Five **Northern Shrikes** for the season were singles on private property in Stonington on Dec. 27 (JRe); in Pomfret on Jan. 1 (RDi); in Hartford on Jan. 7 (DC); at Franklin Swamp Wildlife Management Area in Franklin on Feb. 9 (PR) and in Watertown Feb. 10-19 (GH et al.). A Tree Swallow was an unexpected lingerer at HBSP on Jan. 1 (BA, RMa). American Robins were widespread and conspicuous all winter, highlighted by a roost of c. 11,000 in New Milford on Dec. 19 (DT, GH).

In a season light on lingering warblers, an immature Northern Parula was late on Dec. 6 at Twin Lakes in Salis-

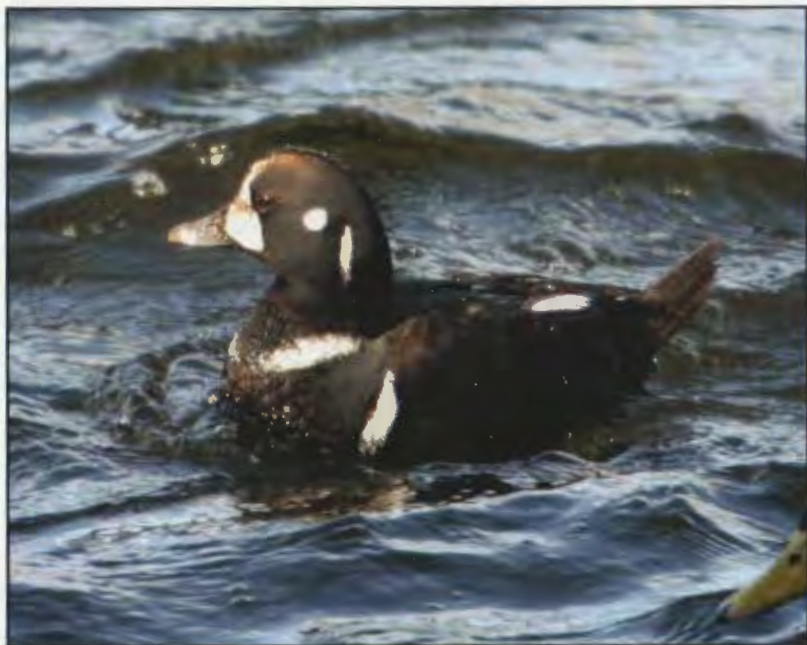


*Hank Golet photo
Barred Owls are always an exciting winter
find. This one posed in Old Lyme on Feb. 9.*

bury (RBe). Orange-crowned Warblers were reported from East Shore Park, New Haven, on Dec. 4-6 (NB et al.); from Stratford Point on Dec. 18 (TL); and from Long Beach in Stratford on Jan. 4-10 (JZ et al.). The only Palm Warbler report came from HBSP on Jan. 3 (RBk). Single Yellow-breasted Chats were in Old Lyme on Jan. 1 (BA, RMa) and in Waterford in February (fide PCo). A female **Western Tanager** made a brief appearance in a Sterling yard on Dec. 20, staying just long enough to be photographed (RDj). **Clay-colored Sparrows** were at Barn Island, Stonington, on Dec. 27 (JRe) and wintering at River Road in Southbury (BB et al.) and in Windsor (JW). Nine Vesper Sparrows for the season was a good number, which included at least three in the Station 43 area (RMa et al.). At least 30 Savannah Sparrows were in the Strong Road section of Station 43 in South Windsor on Jan. 14, a high count (PCi). An "Ipswich" Savannah Sparrow inland in Bloomfield in late December was unexpected (JMe). Late Lincoln's Sparrows turned up on Dec. 6 in Fairfield (ABu) and on Dec.

15 at Station 43 (CEk). Eight Lapland Longspurs were at Groton-New London Airport in Groton on Jan. 2 (PR).

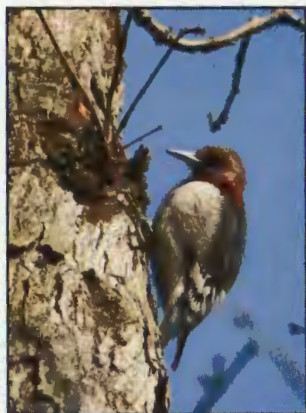
A female Dickcissel wintered at a small state Wildlife Management Area in Bloomfield (JCI&LC et al.). Five Eastern Meadowlarks were at the old Stonington Airport on Dec. 27 (PR), and seven were at Constitution Hill in Southbury on Feb. 18 (RBe). For the second year in a row one wintered at Stratford Point (SK et al.). A female **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was photographed at a Sterling feeder on Jan. 2 (RDj). It was yard bird No. 161 for the proprietors. No. 160 wasn't bad either, as you can see in the previous paragraph! A flock of c 70 Rusty Blackbirds wintered in Edgewood Park, New Haven (m.ob.). Up to 24 visited feeders in a Madison yard in January and February (JCn), and a Hamden yard had a peak of 73 on Feb. 17 (JZ). A state-high total of 41 **Boat-tailed Grackles** were counted going to roost at Sikorsky Airport, Stratford, on Dec. 6 (FM). A high total of 13 Baltimore Orioles for the season were clustered in early December, including up to five at HBSP to at



Bruce Finnan photo
This male Harlequin Duck was an unexpected inland find on the Farmington River in Farmington.



Mark Szantyr photo
This is one of several Baltimore Orioles that lingered into December at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.



Nathaniel Child photo
This immature Red-headed Woodpecker, which wintered at Northwest Park in Windsor, began to acquire its red head as the season progressed.

least Dec. 15 (JA, DP et al.). Others were one in a Middlefield yard on Dec. 9 (ABa); two in an Old Saybrook yard on Dec. 12 (JHa); one in a Branford yard on Dec. 13 (CLe, GL); and one in a North Guilford yard on Dec. 29 (BR). The Christmas Bird Counts also produced four sightings. Winter finches were essentially absent, but one Hamden feeder still went through a lot of finch food with a minimum of 150 American Goldfinches present in the last week of February (CZ, JZ). Both a leucistic and a melanistic American Goldfinch visited a Sterling feeder in January (RDi).

Exotics: A female Mandarin Duck was in Raven Park Pond in Stratford during February (FM et al.)

Observers - Jayne Amico, Carol Ansel, Phil Asprelli, Bill Asteriades, Jim Bair (JBa), Steve Ballantine, Bill Banks, Aaron Barriger (ABa), Mark Barriger (MBa), Larry Bausher, Richard Becker (RBk), Joe Bear (JBe), Ray Belding (RBe), Nick Bonomo, Andy Brand (ABr), Milan Bull (MBu), Alex Burdo

(ABu), Dana Campbell, Paul Carrier (PCa), Mona Cavallero, Paul Cianfaglione (PCi), John Clancy (JCl), Linda Clancy, Al Collins (ACo), Jan Collins (JCo), Patrick Comins (PCo), Jerry Connolly (JCn), Annette Cuniffe (ACu), Peter DeGennaro (PDn), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Buzz Devine (BDe), Bob Dewire (BDw), Angela Dimmitt, Robert Dixon (RDi), Randy Domina (RDo), Carol Donagher, Jim Dugan, Patrick Dugan (PDu), Evan Ehrlich, Carl Ekroth (CEk), Ken Elkins, Chris Elphick (CEl), Tammy Eustis, John Eykelhoff, Patrice Favreau, Karen Fiske, Larry Flynn, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, Frank Gallo, Jim Goggin, Hank Golet, Tina Green, Jan Hamilton (JHa), AJ Hand, Greg Hanisek, Ernie Harris, Roy Harvey, Nathaniel Hernandez, Brian Hiller, Fran Holloway, Tom Holloway, Julian Hough (JHo), Brenda Inskeep, Tait Johansson, Kris Johnson, John Johnson, Sarah Johnston, Jay Kaplan, Brian Kleinman, Cindy Kobak, Scott Kruitbosch, Twan Leenders, Carl Lemmon (CLe), Gary Lemmon, Jim Link (JLi), Chris Loscalzo (CLo), Christopher Lovell (CLv),

Joanne Luppi (JLu), Rick Macsuga (RMA), Frank Mantlik, John Marshall (JMa), John Maynard (JMy), Steve Mayo (SMA), Pat McNichol, Janet Mehmel (JMH), Jamie Meyers (JMe), Rob Mirer (RMi), Judy Moore (JMo), Marty Moore, Don Morgan, Steve Morytko (SMO), Sean Murtha (SMu), Russ Naylor, Chris Nevins, Gina Nichol, John Ogren (JOg), Maryann O'Leary, Ann Orsillo, John Oshlick (JOs), Brian O'Toole, Annie Perko, John Pfitzner, Bev Propen, Dave Provencher, James Randall (JRa), E.J. Raynor, James

Restivo (JRe), , Bob Richard, Dave Rosgen, Phil Rusch, Meredith Sampson (MSa), Jack Schneider, Arthur Shippee, Olaf Soltau, Charla Spector, Steve Spector, Peary Stafford, PK Stafford, Bob Stanowski, Maria Stockmal (MSt), Mark Szantyr (MSz), Rollin Tebbetts, Luke Tiller, John Triana, Dave Tripp, Bill Van Loan, Dennis Varza, Paul Waterman, Brian Webster, Tedor Whitman, Glenn Williams, Chris Woerner, Joe Wojtanowski, Bill Yule, Sara Zagorski, Carol Zipp, Jim Zipp.

A COROLLARY TO THE TERRITORIAL SIGNALING HYPOTHESIS TO EXPLAIN THE FREQUENT COPULATION IN RAPTORIAL BIRDS AS APPLIED TO BALD EAGLES

By Donald A. Hopkins

In a paper (Negro and Grande 2001), the authors list four hypotheses advanced by others (Birkhead et al., 1987) and (Moeller and Birkhead) for frequent raptor copulation: (1) to increase chance of fertilizing all eggs, (2) to strengthen or maintain pair bond, (3) to take advantage of low predation risk, (4) to dilute sperm of competitors. Negro and Grande find these wanting, as I did, and offer evidence of the hypothesis that frequent copulation signals territorial ownership. I find this more logical and offer observations.

In November 2008, I started watching a new eagle nest on the Connecticut River in the north end of Hartford. By plumage estimates (McCullough, 1989), the male was less than 4 years old and the female less than 5 in spring 2008. I assumed the pair was too young to successfully nest in 2008, but they built an impressive nest. The pair was there into 2010. The section of river provides foraging area for nine pairs of nesting eagles, and transient eagles frequent the area. I observed transients in the nesting area during 2009 on Feb. 19 and 28, March 4, 5, 20 and 23; April 1 and 8; and May 7.

In 2009, the pair laid its first egg on March 2. This was determined by observing incubation posture and egg turning (Hopkins, 2006). The pair was seen to copulate on Feb. 17, 23 and 24; March 4; and April 21 and 22. They copulated again on Jan. 13, 2010.

It is questionable if the female can store sperm for the 14 days from Feb. 17 to March 2. The dates Feb. 23 and 24 are more likely related to fertilization. They copulated on March 4, two days after the first egg was laid. On that day a third eagle was seen in the area. The pair copulated in mid-morning. This did not deter the other eagle. The male pursued and

locked talons with the third eagle and whirled down almost into the river (S.R. Ross, pers. com.). This is an aggressive action by the male of the pair (Ferguson-Lees and Christie). The pair was observed to copulate again on April 21 and 22, well after the hatch date. The pair was not seen to copulate again until Jan. 13, 2010. This would be 47 days before an anticipated laying date of March 2, 2010.

As for the pair-bonding hypothesis, I observed on Jan 26, 2010, the eagles placing sticks on the nest. Then the female flew to a nearby tree where the male attempted to mount her. She shook him off and snapped at his head in an aggressive manner. She and I don't think copulation is pair bonding.

From my observation I endorse the hypothesis that frequent copulation by raptors is to ensure fertilization and is a signal of territorial ownership, as demonstrated by this pair of Bald Eagles.

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Julian Hough

The stocky, hunched posture, pale spotted upper parts, streaked under parts and thick bill identify this as a juvenile night-heron (below left.) Given good views, separating juvenile Black-crowned and juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Herons is often straightforward for most birders that are used to seeing both species on a regular basis. Most birders will be familiar with the more abundant Black-crowned – a small, compact, neckless bird with a thick, dagger-like bill, orange-red eyes and short, thick legs – all features which seem to fit our bird. Yellow-crowneds are rangier birds with a longer neck, shorter (darker) bill, proportionately smaller head compared to the body and noticeably longer legs – features not that evident in our photo, and which may point toward Black-crowned.

Although many will have made their choice quite quickly, it is not an easy identification despite the often telltale structural differences noted above. Our bird, at least to me, seems to be rather in the middle. This is a good example of how



identifying birds from a single, static image can be deceiving, even for experienced birders. The angle of the photo may make structural clues hard to analyze, but there are some field marks that allow for a firm identification. They lie in the upper part and wing pattern visible in the photo. Black-crowneds show proportionately large buff-white "tooth" marks on the tips of the feathers. Our bird shows smaller feather tips and noticeable pale fringes to the greater coverts (mostly lacking in Black-crowned), which identify it as a juvenile Yellow-crowned Night Heron. Also, one other feature is visible – the wingtips are rather pointed and project beyond the tail, another feature of Yellow-crowneds, more noticeable in flight at dusk, when the more pointed wings and long legs differentiate them from their similar cousins.

This juvenile Yellow-crowned Night-Heron was photographed by Mark Szantyr in August 2009 in Stratford. The accompanying Black-crowned Night-Heron was photographed by me in September 2009 in West Haven.



Photo Challenge No. 70

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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The Connecticut Warbler (ISSN 1077-0283) is devoted to the study of birds and their conservation in Connecticut and is published quarterly (January, April, July, and October) by the Connecticut Ornithological Association.

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Illustrations and photographs are needed and welcome. Line art of Connecticut and regional birds should be submitted as good quality prints or in original form. All submitted materials will be returned. We can use good quality photographs of birds unaccompanied by an article but with caption including species, date, locality, and other pertinent information.

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Volume 30, No. 3, 2010

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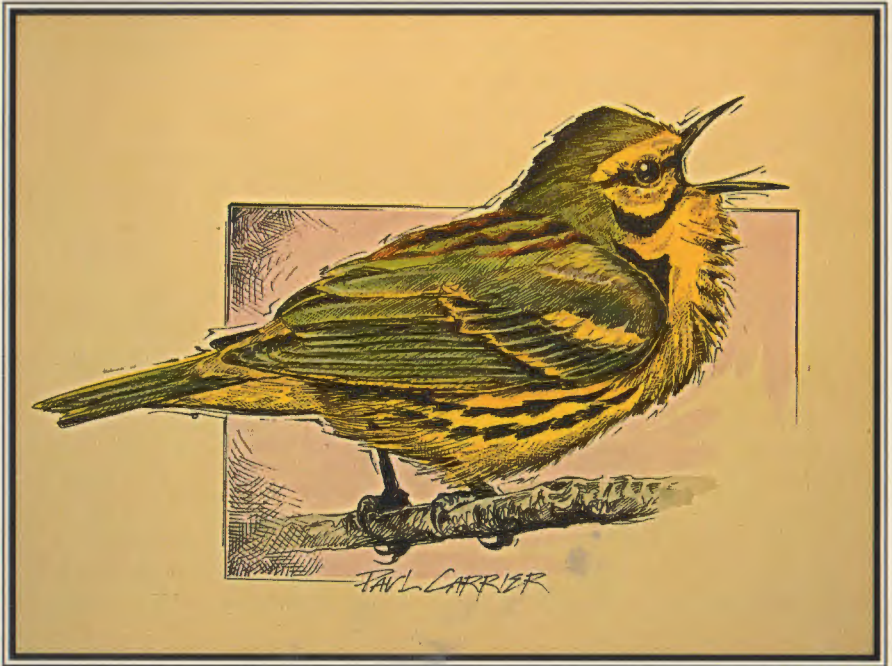
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THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



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A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology

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ON THE COVER

Prairie Warbler

Prairie Warblers are among several shrubland and early successional species that the Summer Bird Count shows to be in decline, presumably because of habitat loss. Paul Carrier of Harwinton created this lively Prairie Warbler image. It could be a territorial male on any one of a number of powerline corridors in Connecticut.

THE 2010 SUMMER BIRD COUNT

By Joe Zeranski and Patrick Comins

Introduction

This year 189 count day species were recorded, slightly above last year's 183 and just about on average, which is 188. Four additional species were recorded in the count period. Two hundred and fifty-five species have been recorded on the SBC since its inception in 1992, including three new species added this year; 145 species have been recorded on all of the 19 counts since 1992. There were 263 observers, in 140 parties, which are both record high numbers; 1278.5 party hours were tallied, with 1219.5 being daylight hours and 59 night hours.

There were 114,588 individual birds recorded, 117% of average, and for the second year in a row a new all-time high. The ten most abundant species were, in descending order: **American Robin, European Starling, Common Grackle, Red-winged Blackbird, Gray Catbird, House Sparrow, Canada Goose, Song Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow and Mourning Dove.** Nine out of ten of these repeat from last year's list with Chipping Sparrows replacing Red-eyed Vireos (12th this year). This is the first year that Chipping Sparrows made the top-ten list since we started tracking this in 2004. The 50 most abundant species on the count account for 87% of the total individuals recorded. The top 50 list is rounded out by: 11/ **American Crow**, 12/ **Red-eyed Vireo**, 13/ **American Goldfinch**, 14/ **Veery**, 15/ **Black-capped Chickadee**, 16/ **Northern Cardinal**, 17/ **Tufted Titmouse**, 18/ **Yellow Warbler**, 19/ **Barn Swallow**, 20/ **Cedar Waxwing**,

21/ **Tree Swallow**, 22/ **Mallard**, 23/ **Common Yellowthroat**, 24/ **Ovenbird**, 25/ **Blue Jay**, 26/ **American Redstart**, 27/ **Wood Thrush**, 28/ **Brown-headed Cowbird**, 29/ **Downy Woodpecker**, 30/ **Rock Pigeon**, 31/ **Double-crested Cormorant**, 32/ **White-breasted Nuthatch**, 33/ **House Finch**, 34/ **Baltimore Oriole**, 35/ **House Wren**, 36/ **Eastern Phoebe**, 37/ **Warbling**

Vireo, 38/ Chimney Swift, 39/ Scarlet Tanager, 40/ Herring Gull, 41/ Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 42/ Eastern Wood-Pewee, 43/ Red-bellied Woodpecker, 44/ Chestnut-sided Warbler, 45/ Indigo Bunting, 46/ Northern Flicker, 47/ Eastern Bluebird, 48/ Eastern Towhee, 49/ Wood Duck and 50/ Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Seventeen species were represented by a single individual: Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Northern Bobwhite, Common Loon (SC), Northern Harrier (E), Sora, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Glaucous Gull, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Nashville Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Wilson's Warbler and Red Crossbill. The four species recorded in the count period, but not on any of the count days are: King Eider, Red-breasted Merganser, Red Knot and Forster's Tern.

There were 27 species recorded on the count days that do not regularly breed in Connecticut and can be considered either late migrants or non-nesting visitors: Snow Goose, Brant, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Long-tailed Duck, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, Common Loon (SC), Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Greater Yellowlegs, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Laughing Gull, Ring-billed Gull, Glaucous Gull, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Blackpoll Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Red Crossbill and Evening Grosbeak. Additionally the four count period species represent non-nesting species: King Eider, Red Knot, Forster's Tern and Red-breasted Merganser. The underlined species are potential nesters, but in the absence of additional supporting evidence they will be considered non-nesting visitors. Additionally, Northern Bobwhites no longer have a self-sustaining breeding population and are reliant upon annual stocking for their persistence in the state and a case could be made for a similar status for Ring-necked Pheasant.

The most noteworthy from this group were the Pectoral Sandpiper found on the Hartford count, the Gray-cheeked



Mark Szantyr
After several years of declining numbers, Blue-winged Warblers showed an upward trend on the 2010 Summer Bird Count.

Thrush found on the Litchfield Hills Count and the **Red Crossbill** found on the New Milford/Pawling Count, each are first SBC records. Red Crossbills are notoriously nomadic in their breeding behavior and can nest in nearly any season in any location, provided there is enough of a cone crop to support them, but in the absence of additional information we will consider them as non-breeding vagrants.

The other noteworthy records from this group include: The first **Brant**, **Least Sandpipers** (6) and **Wilson's Warbler** for the Hartford count and the first **Ring-necked Duck**, **Lesser Scaup** and **Glaucous Gull** (2nd state SBC record), for Greenwich/Stamford. **Summer Evening Grosbeaks** are always intriguing, particularly in the northwest hills, and seven were recorded on the Barkhamsted count (an all time high for SBC), but this species can also be a late migrant and is covered in this section in the absence of additional evidence of nesting. Finally, the first record of **Nashville Warbler** for Greenwich/Stamford was also significant. This species was not listed among the non-nesters above because they do regularly nest in the northern part of the state, but this record likely represents a non-nesting passage bird.

Notable Nesting Species

Two **Gadwall** were a good find for New Haven. This species regularly nests in small numbers along the coast, but can be difficult to locate in the course of an SBC weekend. **Blue-winged Teal (T)**, were great finds in Hartford (1) and Litchfield Hills (2) and were the first SBC records for this state threatened species in those areas. A total of six **American Bitterns (E)** were found this year, including the first ever for New Milford/Pawling, two for Barkhamsted and three for Litchfield Hills. American Bitterns can be late migrants, but any evidence of nesting by this state endangered species is notable news. Two **Least Bitterns (T)** were found on the Hartford count. Station 43 is within the count circle here and is one of the few remaining regular nesting locations for this species. For the second year in a row there were **Black-crowned Night-Herons** recorded on inland counts, one in Hartford and one in the Woodbury/Roxbury area. **Yellow-crowned Nigh-Herons (SC)** are so far restricted to coastal areas in Connecticut and five were recorded in Greenwich/Stamford. Six **Glossy Ibis (SC)** on the New Haven Count were a good find. They are reasonably common further east along the coast, but can be difficult to come by in areas covered by SBC.

The **Northern Harrier (E)** on the Hartford count was intriguing and a first SBC record for this area, but may represent a late migrant. The only recent confirmed nesting by this state endangered species has been in Stratford and there was no evidence of this species nesting in Stratford this year, so the species may again be extirpated as a nester. **Northern Goshawks** were recorded in the count period in the New Haven and Hartford areas and three were recorded in Barkhamsted and one for Litchfield Hills. Nesting **Peregrine Falcons (E)** continue to expand in number and range in the state. This year nine were recorded, including the first SBC record for Woodbury/Roxbury.

One **Sora** was recorded on the Litchfield Hills count and this species is always a great find for SBC since it is not only



Frank Mantlik

Unlike our other breeding ardeids, Yellow-crowned Night-Herons readily nest in developed areas. These were on a residential street in Stratford.

uncommon, but can also be quite secretive and difficult to detect. The same can be said for the four **Northern Saw-Whet Owls (SC)** recorded in Barkhamsted. Hartford recorded its first **Common Nighthawk (E)** for the SBC and two were found on the New Haven Count and two for Woodbury/Roxbury. The New Haven records are an annual occurrence and may represent the last remaining nesting population in the state, but finding them in Hartford is a good sign, since all of the recent nesting records in the state have occurred on urban rooftops.

Both "**Brewster's**" and "**Lawrence's**" **Warblers** were found this year on the Hartford and Greenwich/Stamford counts respectively, the first time that we recall both hybrids being recorded on the same SBC and the first record for "**Brewster's**" for the SBC. Only two **Northern Parulas (SC)** were found (Woodbury/Roxbury). This is a species that had been

seemingly making a comeback as a nester in Connecticut, but this year's results were disappointing. Three **Grasshopper Sparrows (E)** were recorded on the Hartford count, presumably at Rentschler Field, one of only two remaining strongholds for this state endangered species in the state. Finally, **Saltmarsh Sparrows (SC)** were recorded on the Greenwich/Stamford and New Haven Counts and three **Seaside Sparrows (T)** were found in New Haven. These two species could easily be missed, especially since their nesting strongholds aren't well covered by SBC territories.

Species Recorded in Above Average Numbers

Record-high counts are the theme this year, with 37 statewide 10-year high counts recorded. Please see table 2.

Table 2, species with record high counts (in absolute numbers not corrected for party hours)

Wood Duck	Hairy Woodpecker	Pine Warbler
Ring-necked Duck**	Pileated Woodpecker	Ovenbird
Double-crested Cormorant	Yellow-throated Vireo	Northern Waterthrush
Black Vulture	Fish Crow	Louisiana Waterthrush
Turkey Vulture	Bank Swallow*	Chipping Sparrow
Osprey	Barn Swallow*	White-throated Sparrow*
Red-shouldered Hawk	Black-capped Chickadee*	Northern Cardinal
Peregrine Falcon	White-breasted Nuthatch	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Spotted Sandpiper	Carolina Wren	Indigo Bunting
Least Sandpiper**	Veery	Common Grackle
Great Black-backed Gull*	Hermit Thrush	Brown-headed Cowbird*
Eastern Screech-Owl*	American Robin	Evening Grosbeak**
Downy Woodpecker	Gray Catbird	

*10 year high only, all time high was 1999. **migrants

Species that had record high counts when corrected for party hours are in bold.

Of these 37, three are migrants, 30 are all-time highs and 22 are all-time highs when corrected for party hours.

Species Recorded in Below Average Numbers

Remarkably, only one species recorded an all-time low this year, **Snowy Egret (T)**. While colonial nesting birds like Snowy Egrets are not best measured by the SBC, because colonies themselves are not often visited (except for Great Captains Island) and populations are estimated by observations of foraging birds far from the colony, there does seem to be a general declining trend for Snowys (at least since the population peak in 1996). Another notable low count comes from **Red-breasted Merganser**, which was missed as a count day species (although found in the Count period) for the first time since 1997.

There are though 33 species that were found at 80% or less their 10-year average.

Table 3, species recorded at well below average numbers

Species	% of 10 YA	Species	% of 10 YA	Species	% of 10 YA
American Woodcock	80%	Brant*	68%	Nighthawk, Common* (E)	42%
Hooded Merganser	79%	Brown Thrasher (SC)	66%	Least Tern (T)	42%
Prairie Warbler	78%	Ruddy Turnstone*	61%	Black-billed Cuckoo	36%
Yellow-rumped Warbler	78%	Snowy Egret (T)	61%	Northern Parula (SC)	36%
Worm-eating Warbler	78%	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	49%	Ruffed Grouse	26%
Nashville Warbler	77%	Northern Bobwhite	48%	White-eyed Vireo	25%
Monk Parakeet	76%	Saltmarsh Sparrow (SC)	46%	Gadwall	24%
Ring-necked Pheasant	74%	White-rumped Sandpiper*	44%	Common Loon* (SC)	21%
Least Bittern (T)	74%	Golden-crowned Kinglet	43%	Blackpoll Warbler*	19%
Field Sparrow	72%	Ruddy Duck*	42%	Laughing Gull*	14%
Cliff Swallow	70%	Whip-poor-will (SC)	42%	Semipalmated Sandpiper*	6%

* *Non-nesting species, with a special case for Common Nighthawks, which do nest in small numbers, but the bulk of those recorded on SBC are migrants.*

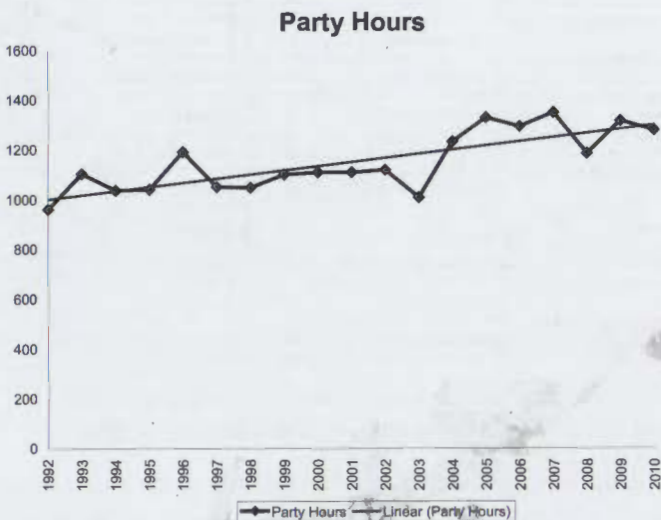
Consistent with the theme, shrubland and other early successional specialists are well represented within this group by **American Woodcock, Prairie Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Field Sparrow, Brown Thrasher (SC), Snowy Egret (T)** (nest

in shrub layer in colonies), **Yellow-billed Cuckoo**, **Northern Bobwhite**, **Whip-poor-will (SC)**, **Black-billed Cuckoo**, **Ruffed Grouse**, and **White-eyed Vireo**. One potential bright spot among the shrubland specialists are this year's results for **Blue-winged Warbler**. Though still at well below historical highs, the years' numbers were at a respectable 90% of the 10-year average with 305 recorded. This is still covered among the below average species because numbers in the 600's were the rule in the period between 1992-1997 and the all time high was 716 in 1996.

Thank you

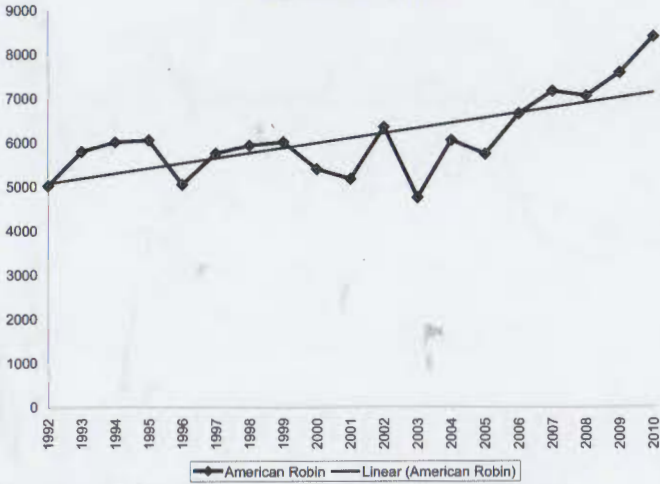
In conclusion, on behalf of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, we would like to thank all of the observers, captains and compilers. The data that you provide is critical for understanding our changing breeding bird populations.

Note: Any evidence of nesting by state-endangered (E), threatened (T) or special concern (SC) species should be reported to the COA Natural Diversity Database (NDDDB) Project. This will ensure that the best available information can be taken into account in land-use decisions.



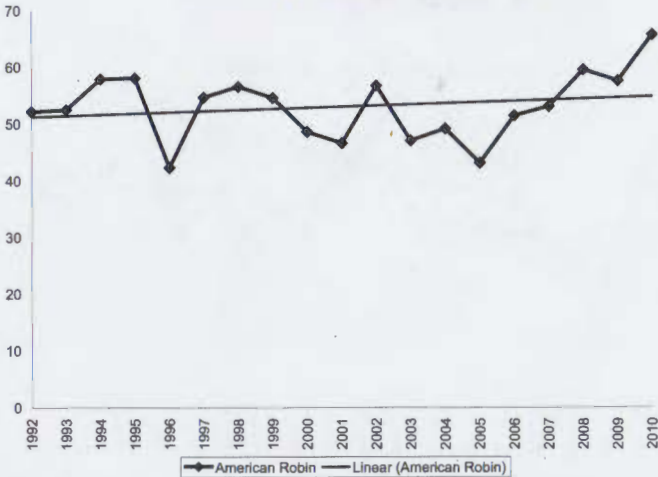
There has been a general increasing trend in participation in the Summer Bird Count since 1992, with some year to year variability. This year we will be illustrating how party hours can influence apparent trends for species covered by the SBC.

American Robin



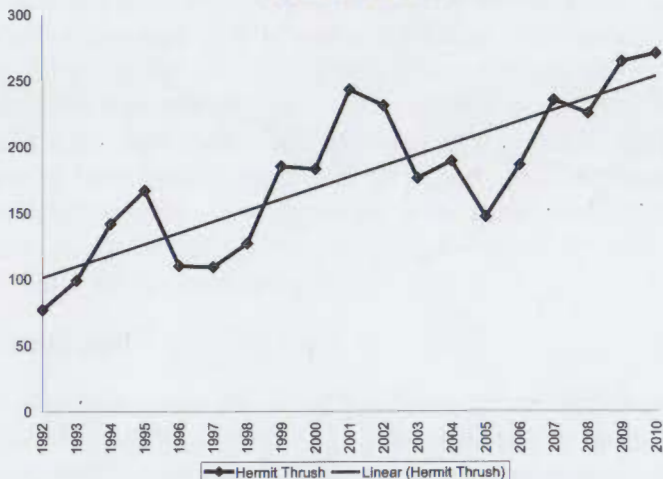
Raw numbers of American Robins appear to have an increasing trend since 1992.

American Robin Party Hours



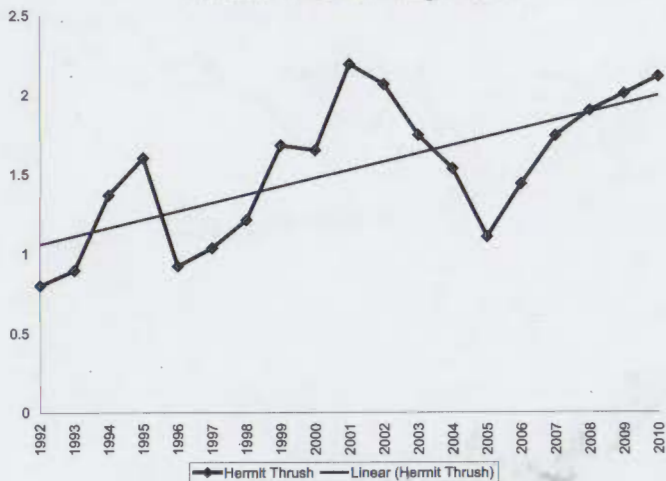
But when party hours are taken into account the trend is much less clear. This is the classic situation where you would expect party hours to have a big influence. In general, the more hours you spend in the field, the more American Robins you'd expect to find.

Hermit Thrush

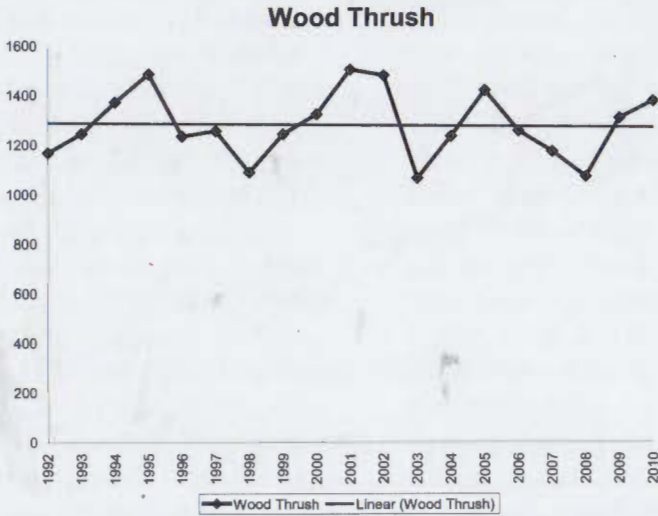


For Hermit Thrush, the raw data indicate a rather large increasing trend.

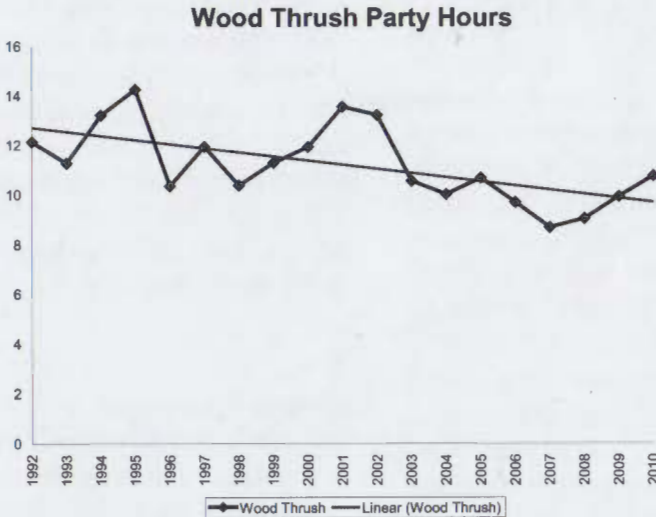
Hermit Thrush Party Hours



When corrected for party hours, more year-to-year eccentricity is highlighted, but there still appears to be an increase.

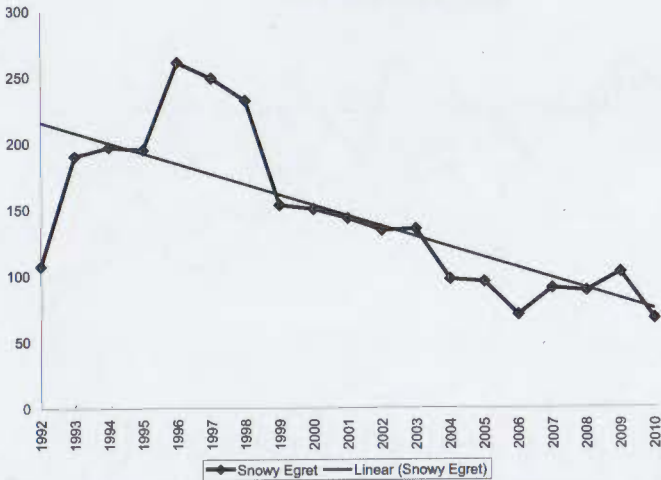


The raw totals for Wood Thrush seem to indicate a rather stable population.



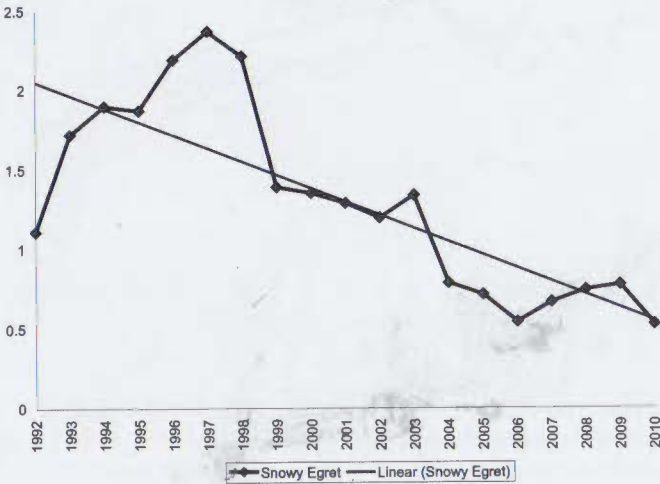
But when party hours are taken into account, there may be a decline, which is consistent with other indicators such as Breeding Bird Survey results.

Snowy Egret



In the case of Snowy Egrets, there appears to be a decline no matter how you slice it. This is to be expected for two reasons, one the trends are quite dramatic, and secondly, you wouldn't expect the statewide party hours to have much influence on how many Snowy Egrets are found, as they are mostly coastal and the bulk of them are found in colony searches.

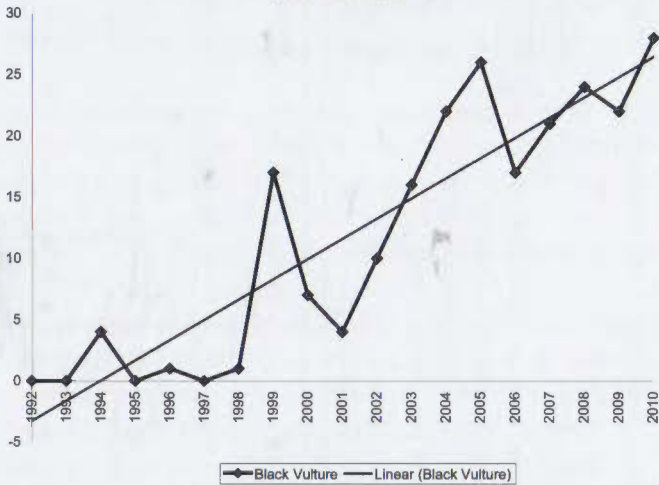
Snowy Egret



This consistency is to be expected for two reasons, one the trends are quite dramatic, and secondly, you wouldn't expect

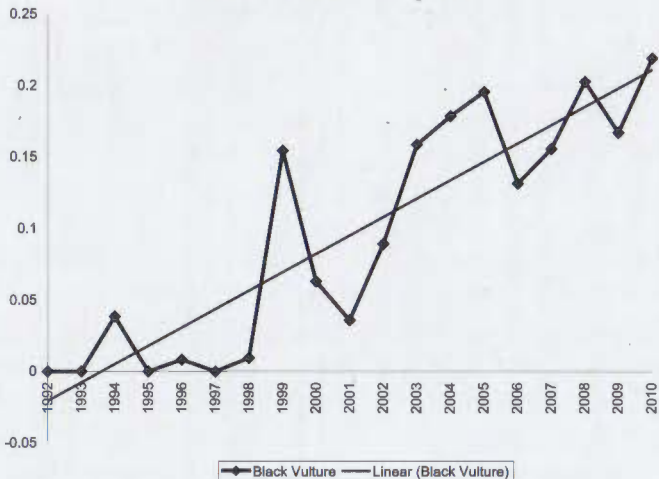
the statewide party hours to have much influence on how many Snowy Egrets are found, as they are mostly coastal and the bulk of them are found in colony searches.

Black Vulture



For Black Vultures, the increase is apparent whether or not you look at party hours, which is again not surprising considering they have gone from nearly absent to being quite regular in the state.

Black Vulture Party Hours



The increase holds up regardless of the fact that more hours were spent in the field.

2010 Connecticut Summer Bird Count Totals

Species known to nest recently within Connecticut are shown in italics. The high/low/rare statistics below are given for local SBCs at least ten years old. For SBCs held for fewer than 10 years (NM/P) only new Count Day species are noted. Stats under **State Totals** pertain to the prior ten SBCs.

- "Rare"- noted on fewer than five years during previously censused 10 years [outlined box] = XX
- New **Count Day**[CD] species; not recorded on previously censused 10 years [darkened outlined box] = XX
- More numbers were tallied than were on any of the previously censused 10 years [underlined number] = XX
- Fewer numbers** were tallied than recorded on any of the previously censused 10 year [boldfaced number] = **XX**
- Not recorded** on CD 2010, but recorded on all the previously censused 10 years [boldfaced zero] = **0**
- Totals shown are all-time records [double underline] = 0

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:			2010	% of	#	2000-2009				
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state	Northern	State	00-09	yrs		Ave	Low	High		
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Totals				Average	obs
Snow Goose	<u>2</u>								<u>2</u>	1000%	2	0.2	1	1
Canada Goose	1371	<u>602</u>	514	350	317	210	<u>308</u>	73	3745	89%	10	4195	3585	5197
Brant	12	13	<u>1</u>						26	68%	10	38	6	235
Mute Swan	99	105	<u>11</u>	13	37		9	<u>2</u>	276	97%	10	285	165	462
Wood Duck	160	<u>65</u>	<u>112</u>	59	52	19	96	<u>36</u>	<u>599</u>	166%	10	361	272	535
Gadwall		2							2	24%	9	8.3	2	15

American Wigeon									0%	2	0.2	1	1	
American Black Duck	40	9			6	3			58	83%	10	70	30	120
Mallard	615	299	342	117	119	100	120	47	1759	86%	10	2039	1460	2825
MallardxAm Black Duck							1		1					
Blue-winged Teal			1				2		3	375%	1	0.8	8	8
Northern Shoveler										0%	1	0.2	2	2
Green-winged Teal										0%	5	0.9	1	4
Ring-necked Duck	1	1							2	500%	4	0.4	1	1
Greater Scaup	1								1	143%	5	0.7	1	2
Lesser Scaup	1								1	500%	2	0.2	1	1
King Eider	CP								CP				0	
White-winged Scoter										0%	2	0.6	1	5
Long-tailed Duck	4								4	267%	7	1.5	1	4
Bufflehead	1								1	125%	5	0.8	1	2
Common Goldeneye										0%	3	0.4	1	2
Hooded Merganser		1			11	3	8	1	24	79%	10	30	11	72
Common Merganser				44	12	51	6		113	91%	10	124	102	196
Red-breasted Merganser	CP								0 CP	0%	10	1.7	1	4
Ruddy Duck	1								1	42%	5	2.4	1	10
Ring-necked Pheasant	CP	1		2	2		1		6	74%	10	8.1	3	16
Ruffed Grouse						1	1	3	5	26%	10	19	4	27
Wild Turkey	60	54	33	64	73	130	125	25	564	107%	10	528	461	645
Northern Bobwhite		1							1	48%	9	2.1	1	5
Red-throated Loon										0%	4	1.3	1	8
Common Loon							1		1	21%	9	4.7	2	9
Pied-billed Grebe										0%	7	1.9	0	7
Wilson's Storm-petrel									#DIV/0!	CP		0.0	0	0
Northern Gannet										0%	1	0.3	3	3
Double-crested Cormorant	628	336	12	4	20	3	14	8	1025	127%	10	807	574	977

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2010 State	% of 00-09	# yrs	2000-2009		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern						Totals	Average	obs
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St						
Great Cormorant										0%	1	0.1	1	1
American Bittern					1	2	3	6	273%	8	2.2	1	6	
Least Bittern			2					2	74%	9	2.7	1	7	
Great Blue Heron	16	13	49	36	39	55	88	21	317	138%	10	230	153	375
Great Egret	202	60					1		263	98%	10	269	188	376
Snowy Egret	41	26							67	61%	10	110	70	150
Little Blue Heron										0%	8	1.2	1	2
Tricolored Heron										0%	2	0.2	1	1
Green Heron	23	10	21	4	6	2	11	8	85	112%	10	76	59	113
Black-cr Night-Heron	215	26	1	1					243	83%	10	293	165	458
Yellow-cr Night-Heron	5								5	86%	10	5.8	1	21
Glossy Ibis		6							6	300%	6	2.0	1	8
Black Vulture	1	3		8	3	5	8		28	166%	10	17	4	26
Turkey Vulture	35	38	11	50	83	109	57	19	402	121%	10	331	270	382
Osprey	59	104	2	2	2	1	5	1	176	201%	10	87	51	129
Bald Eagle			2	3	1	18	5	1	30	168%	10	18	10	30
Northern Harrier			1						1	100%	4	1.0	1	5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	3				3	5	4	1	16	152%	10	11	7	18
Cooper's Hawk	4	3	7	7	2	5	8	1	37	109%	10	34	21	45
accipiter species														
Northern Goshawk		CP	CP			3	1		4	100%	10	4.0	2	7
Red-shouldered Hawk	8	9	6	20	4	22	19	7	95	193%	10	49	32	82
Broad-winged Hawk	4			12	3	15	13	7	54	94%	10	58	45	66
Red-tailed Hawk	54	24	41	37	25	23	38	10	252	93%	10	272	219	341

<i>American Kestrel</i>		1	2	2	5	2		1	13	104%	10	13	3	21
<i>Merlin</i>										0%	1	0.1	1	1
<i>Peregrine Falcon</i>		3	5	1					9	209%	10	4.3	2	7
<i>Clapper Rail</i>	3	14							17	150%	10	11	2	21
<i>King Rail</i>										0%	3	0.3	1	1
<i>Virginia Rail</i>			2	1	1	1	19		24	94%	10	25	15	38
<i>Sora</i>							1		1	91%	8	1.1	1	3
<i>American Coot</i>										0%	5	0.7	1	3
<i>Black-bellied Plover</i>	1	4							5	132%	8	3.8	1	9
<i>American Golden-Plover</i>										0%	1	0.1	1	1
<i>Semipalmated Plover</i>		15							15	250%	6	6	1	35
<i>Piping Plover</i>		12							12	84%	10	14	6	24
<i>Killdeer</i>	63	20	79	28	9	31	13	52	295	124%	10	238	158	297
<i>American Oystercatcher</i>	46	14							60	139%	10	43	29	60
<i>Spotted Sandpiper</i>	3	8	34	7	1	3	3	6	65	173%	10	38	26	63
<i>Solitary Sandpiper</i>										0%	6	0.7	1	2
<i>Greater Yellowlegs</i>	1		4						5	217%	7	2.3	1	5
<i>Willet</i>	2	21							23	197%	10	12	4	24
<i>Upland Sandpiper</i>			3						3	1000%	1	0.3	3	3
<i>Ruddy Turnstone</i>		3							3	61%	8	4.9	1	11
<i>Red Knot</i>	CP								CP	0%	3	0.5	1	3
<i>Sanderling</i>										0%	6	3.9	1	21
<i>Semipalmated Sandpiper</i>	4								4	6%	9	66	2	349
<i>Western Sandpiper</i>										0%	1	0.1	1	1
<i>Least Sandpiper</i>		60	6						66	1048%	4	6.3	1	30
<i>White-rumped Sandpiper</i>	1								1	43%	6	2.3	1	6
<i>Pectoral Sandpiper</i>			1						1				0	
<i>Purple Sandpiper</i>										0%	1	0.1	1	1
<i>Dunlin</i>										0%	4	1.5	1	11

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2010 State Totals	% of 00-09 Average	# yrs obs	2000-2009		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern						Ave	Low	High
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St						
Short-billed Dowitcher									0%	2	1.1	3	8	
Wilson's Snipe									0%	1	0.1	1	1	
<i>American Woodcock</i>	1			2		2	4	2	80%	10	14	8	24	
Laughing Gull	6							6	14%	10	43	6	111	
Bonaparte's Gull									0%	1	0.1	1	1	
Ring-billed Gull	66	304	27	1	3	2	1	404	85%	10	473	311	795	
<i>Herring Gull</i>	504	236	2					742	93%	10	800	532	1096	
Glaucous Gull	1							1	1000%	1	0.1	1	1	
<i>Great Black-backed Gull</i>	245	123	5					373	149%	10	250	213	342	
<i>Least Tern</i>		75						75	42%	10	181	13	334	
Gull-billed Tern									0%	1	0.2	2	2	
Caspian Tern									0%	2	0.5	2	3	
<i>Black Tern</i>									0%	2	0.2	1	1	
<i>Common Tern</i>	357	33						390	136%	10	287	84	547	
Forster's Tern	CP							CP	0%	6	2.2	1	7	
Royal Tern									0%	1	0.1	1	1	
Black Skimmer									0%	9	7.7	2	26	
<i>Rock Pigeon</i>	190	321	230	68	55	90	113	25	1092	98%	10	1116	898	1374
<i>Mourning Dove</i>	539	394	369	363	170	323	326	176	2660	101%	10	2639	2334	2897
<i>Monk Parakeet</i>	5	73							78	76%	10	103	26	288
<i>Black-billed Cuckoo</i>	CP		5	3			1	1	10	36%	10	28	10	69
<i>Yellow-billed Cuckoo</i> cuckoo species	2	1		1	3	5	1	6	19	49%	10	38	11	144
<i>Eastern Screech-Owl</i>	18	1		4	17	2	4	12	58	143%	10	41	27	59

<i>Great Horned Owl</i>	6			5	1	1	6	<u>4</u>	23	81%	10	29	10	38
<i>Barred Owl</i>	14	<u>1</u>	1	7	7	39	33	<u>10</u>	112	143%	10	78	57	131
<i>Northern Saw-whet Owl</i>						4			4	182%	8	2.2	1	7
<i>Nighthawk, Common</i>		2	<u>1</u>	2					5	42%	10	12	1	77
<i>Whip-poor-will</i>						7			7	44%	10	16	5	25
<i>Chimney Swift</i>	108	97	92	149	48	166	83	37	780	113%	10	692	554	783
<i>Ruby-throated Hummingbird</i>	25	13	5	<u>26</u>	29	47	<u>56</u>	15	216	144%	10	150	83	220
<i>Belted Kingfisher</i>	17	11	16	11	13	25	15	4	112	111%	10	101	70	136
<i>Red-bellied Woodpecker</i>	201	<u>89</u>	75	80	41	50	67	36	639	113%	10	565	426	750
<i>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</i>				45	52	<u>352</u>	200		649	175%	10	371	242	541
<i>Downy Woodpecker</i>	<u>277</u>	90	92	<u>169</u>	103	<u>112</u>	181	<u>71</u>	<u>1095</u>	151%	10	728	501	905
<i>Hairy Woodpecker</i>	<u>67</u>	26	<u>28</u>	<u>35</u>	29	<u>71</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>356</u>	151%	10	236	202	286
<i>Northern Flicker</i>	218	73	<u>118</u>	50	26	42	<u>68</u>	18	<u>613</u>	111%	10	554	481	687
<i>Pileated Woodpecker</i>	29	4	<u>8</u>	17	10	<u>44</u>	<u>48</u>	7	<u>167</u>	144%	10	116	80	144
<i>Olive-sided Flycatcher</i>					2				2	182%	6	1.1	1	3
<i>Eastern Wood-Pewee</i>	103	51	65	69	29	104	181	42	644	102%	10	631	510	797
<i>Yellow-bellied Flycatcher</i>										0%	4	1.1	1	5
<i>Acadian Flycatcher</i>	1			13	2	2	5		23	105%	10	22	7	31
<i>Alder Flycatcher</i>			1	8	5	14	87	3	118	118%	10	100	75	138
<i>Willow Flycatcher</i>	26	36	47	30	11	15	66	2	233	90%	10	260	226	315
<i>Least Flycatcher</i>				17	15	27	49	12	120	84%	10	143	98	166
Epidonax species						4			4					
<i>Eastern Phoebe</i>	80	25	44	136	88	<u>197</u>	192	72	834	114%	10	734	496	907
<i>Great Crested Flycatcher</i>	72	38	49	71	29	56	106	33	454	103%	10	442	360	529
<i>Eastern Kingbird</i>	59	32	30	92	31	95	109	<u>59</u>	507	90%	10	564	486	683
<i>White-eyed Vireo</i>	<u>1</u>	2			2				5	25%	10	20	7	49
<i>Yellow-throated Vireo</i>	<u>25</u>	7	5	<u>76</u>	34	24	<u>94</u>	15	<u>280</u>	121%	10	231	176	276
<i>Blue-headed Vireo</i>	1		<u>1</u>	<u>12</u>	7	115	<u>49</u>	2	<u>187</u>	116%	10	162	100	227
<i>Warbling Vireo</i>	130	<u>104</u>	145	160	72	<u>48</u>	99	49	807	122%	10	659	517	825

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2010	% of	#	2000-2009		
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern			State	00-09	yrs	Ave	Low	High
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Totals	Average	obs			
<i>Red-eyed Vireo</i>	180	80	63	245	171	1048	566	137	2490	96%	10	2606	2048	2992
<i>Blue Jay</i>	445	225	151	187	114	301	187	64	1674	112%	10	1498	1328	1729
<i>American Crow</i>	395	237	183	384	309	424	466	109	2507	86%	10	2918	2202	4109
<i>Fish Crow</i>	60	27	20	11	6	8	7	5	144	179%	10	80	54	123
<i>Common Raven</i>	4	7	2	9	8	46	35		111	161%	10	69	40	116
<i>Horned Lark</i>										0%	1	0.2	2	2
<i>Purple Martin</i>	24	4					1		29	94%	10	31	14	54
<i>Tree Swallow</i>	214	129	102	129	184	390	479	139	1766	104%	10	1700	1245	2176
<i>Northern Rough-w Swallow</i>	63	46	38	50	49	58	30	40	374	93%	10	403	326	540
<i>Bank Swallow</i>			89	6	15	265	4	28	407	147%	10	276	148	380
<i>Cliff Swallow</i>	36	4	CP	92	39	33	7		211	70%	10	302	181	420
<i>Barn Swallow</i>	361	289	88	256	126	243	340	186	1889	117%	10	1613	1339	1843
<i>Black-capped Chickadee</i>	326	148	89	257	121	682	460	171	2254	124%	10	1820	1602	1977
<i>Tufted Titmouse</i>	484	179	126	258	133	415	231	179	2005	111%	10	1803	1478	2269
<i>Red-breasted Nuthatch</i>	3		1		1	17	19	1	42	150%	10	28	7	60
<i>White-breasted Nuthatch</i>	201	59	64	72	68	222	182	114	982	183%	10	537	349	626
<i>Brown Creeper</i>	7		2	2	5	18	34		68	92%	10	74	41	130
<i>Carolina Wren</i>	209	44	63	68	37	32	23	26	502	155%	10	323	226	463
<i>House Wren</i>	202	38	33	211	81	157	160	42	924	105%	10	878	544	1143
<i>Winter Wren</i>		1	1	4	2	59	7		74	171%	10	43	13	88
<i>Marsh Wren</i>	28	53	8		3		28		120	106%	10	113	52	253
<i>Golden-crowned Kinglet</i>					1	2			3	42%	9	7.1	4	16
<i>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</i>										0%	1	0.1	1	1
<i>Blue-gray Gnatcatcher</i>	23	4	9	76	19	41	62	65	299	116%	1	257	193	321

<i>Eastern Bluebird</i>	57	<u>19</u>	30	142	63	96	147	<u>59</u>	613	113%	10	541	441	672
<i>Gray-checked Thrush</i>							<u>1</u>		<u>1</u>					
<i>Veery</i>	128	16	13	215	226	<u>890</u>	665	107	<u>2260</u>	131%	10	1731	1371	2198
<i>Bicknell's Thrush</i>										0%	1	0.1	1	1
<i>Swainson's Thrush</i>						<u>1</u>			1	167%	5	0.6	1	2
<i>Hermit Thrush</i>	<u>1</u>		1	12	3	<u>184</u>	69		<u>270</u>	130%	10	208	147	264
<i>Wood Thrush</i>	200	71	88	191	95	<u>364</u>	290	76	<u>1375</u>	107%	10	1283	1065	1503
<i>American Robin</i>	<u>2728</u>	<u>1465</u>	912	683	484	<u>965</u>	729	438	<u>8404</u>	136%	10	6192	4750	7583
<i>Gray Catbird</i>	1024	348	305	531	308	<u>855</u>	746	<u>279</u>	<u>4396</u>	116%	10	3798	3140	4333
<i>Northern Mockingbird</i>	141	134	85	74	30	<u>13</u>	22	12	<u>511</u>	94%	10	541	403	754
<i>Brown Thrasher</i>	6	3	3	5	3		8	2	30	66%	10	45	26	68
<i>European Starling</i>	1320	<u>1707</u>	943	680	360	446	401	756	6613	110%	10	6006	4766	8852
<i>Cedar Waxwing</i>	166	122	159	206	66	498	540	<u>119</u>	1876	118%	10	1596	1181	2387
<i>Blue-winged Warbler</i>	60	31	9	66	22	<u>26</u>	55	<u>36</u>	305	90%	10	340	271	426
"Lawrence's Warbler"	1								<u>1</u>					
"Brewster's Warbler"			<u>1</u>						<u>1</u>					
<i>Golden-winged Warbler</i>										0%	3	0.3	1	1
<i>Tennessee Warbler</i>										0%	1	0.1	1	1
<i>Nashville Warbler</i>	<u>1</u>								1	77%	5	1.3	1	7
<i>Northern Parula</i>				<u>2</u>					2	36%	10	5.6	1	11
<i>Yellow Warbler</i>	359	162	219	336	124	183	446	<u>149</u>	1978	99%	10	2004	1791	2195
<i>Chestnut-sided Warbler</i>	4	3	7	<u>99</u>	37	234	231	9	624	99%	10	632	553	701
<i>Magnolia Warbler</i>			1	<u>2</u>	3	82	7		95	92%	10	103	77	139
<i>Black-throated Blue Warbler</i>				<u>13</u>	2	147	69		231	118%	10	197	160	243
<i>Yellow-rumped Warbler</i>				<u>1</u>		63	34		98	78%	10	126	97	169
<i>Black-thr Green Warbler</i>	5	<u>9</u>	1	44	10	171	<u>164</u>	12	416	121%	10	345	272	436
<i>Blackburnian Warbler</i>				9	3	114	96		222	117%	10	189	139	243
<i>Pine Warbler</i>	66	24	22	30	10	146	137	<u>25</u>	<u>460</u>	117%	10	392	314	435
<i>Prairie Warbler</i>	20	18	14	20	6	4	5	<u>14</u>	101	78%	10	129	80	234

SPECIES	Coastal SBCs		CT	Upland SBCs:					2010	% of	#	2000-2009			
	GS	NH	Valley	Mid-state		Northern			State	00-09		yrs	Ave	Low	High
			Hfd	WR	NM/P	Ba	LH	St	Totals	Average	obs				
Bay-breasted Warbler									0%	1	0.5	5	5		
Blackpoll Warbler								1	19%	10	5.3	1	11		
Cerulean Warbler					2		2	7	2	13	10	10	4	16	
Black-&-White Warbler	21	22	5	63	28		241	159	9	548	105%	10	522	417	617
American Redstart	32	7	66	<u>244</u>	133		<u>408</u>	430	<u>57</u>	1377	117%	10	1175	896	1382
Prothonotary Warbler									0%	1	0.1	1	1		
Worm-eating Warbler	23	16	3	22	8		1	11	13	97	78%	10	125	75	201
Ovenbird	74	73	<u>31</u>	183	102		601	564	<u>94</u>	<u>1722</u>	120%	10	1437	1245	1667
Northern Waterthrush	<u>2</u>			<u>4</u>	8		<u>20</u>	<u>42</u>	1	<u>77</u>	166%	10	46	22	59
Louisiana Waterthrush	27		4	71	14		<u>34</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>205</u>	130%	10	157	84	196
Kentucky Warbler										0%	1	0.3	1	2	
Mourning Warbler										0%	6	1.2	1	4	
Common Yellowthroat	167	72	88	197	113		560	423	<u>105</u>	1725	100%	10	1733	1516	1974
Hooded Warbler	CP		<u>2</u>	29	13			<u>6</u>		50	141%	10	36	11	72
Wilson's Warbler			<u>1</u>							<u>1</u>	1000%	1	0.1	1	1
Canada Warbler				1			21	22		44	82%	10	54	39	75
Yellow-breasted Chat										0%	4	0.5	1	2	
Scarlet Tanager	90	46	17	101	61		<u>262</u>	163	40	780	107%	10	731	569	839
Eastern Towhee	54	37	41	77	71		127	155	<u>45</u>	607	104%	10	586	446	705
Chipping Sparrow	400	<u>206</u>	<u>174</u>	389	217		752	342	<u>265</u>	<u>2745</u>	128%	10	2148	1701	2601
Field Sparrow	17	7	7	34	8		4	9	10	96	72%	10	134	82	188
Savannah Sparrow	<u>1</u>		42	19	3		2	8	8	83	154%	10	54	21	92
Grasshopper Sparrow			3							3	125%	9	2.4	2	5
Nelson's Sparrow										0%	4	0.4	1	1	

<i>Saltmarsh Sparrow</i>	2	4						6	46%	10	13	5	26	
<i>Seaside Sparrow</i>		3						3	83%	5	3.6	3	11	
<i>Song Sparrow</i>	562	<u>242</u>	308	345	232	546	536	115	2886	111%	10	2606	2093	3133
<i>Swamp Sparrow</i>	2	<u>4</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>7</u>	36	60	211	3	343	109%	10	314	245	368
<i>White-throated Sparrow</i>						2	<u>16</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>19</u>	268%	10	7.1	2	15
<i>Dark-eyed Junco</i>				<u>1</u>		43	4		48	114%	10	42	29	59
<i>Northern Cardinal</i>	490	<u>236</u>	205	327	172	<u>403</u>	262	<u>152</u>	<u>2247</u>	127%	10	1767	1452	2051
<i>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</i>	54	42	<u>36</u>	91	82	<u>123</u>	<u>121</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>577</u>	135%	10	427	351	509
<i>Blue Grosbeak</i>										0%	1	0.1	1	1
<i>Indigo Bunting</i>	72	39	32	138	80	113	100	<u>42</u>	<u>616</u>	130%	10	475	344	609
<i>Dickcissel</i>										0%	1	0.1	1	1
<i>Bobolink</i>	<u>1</u>		32	92	22	28	212	4	391	81%	10	481	335	703
<i>Red-winged Blackbird</i>	821	333	<u>899</u>	575	446	<u>453</u>	843	<u>678</u>	5048	111%	10	4549	3851	5453
<i>Eastern Meadowlark</i>		<u>1</u>	1	2	5		1	15	25	128%	10	20	8	39
<i>Common Grackle</i>	<u>2577</u>	<u>1417</u>	621	515	200	<u>484</u>	484	236	<u>6534</u>	135%	10	4827	3871	5487
<i>Boat-tailed Grackle</i>										0%	5	1.1	1	5
<i>Brown-headed Cowbird</i>	254	163	126	<u>227</u>	102	133	142	<u>137</u>	<u>1284</u>	115%	10	1120	922	1281
<i>Orchard Oriole</i>	28	<u>12</u>	8	22		<u>1</u>	2		73	100%	10	73	38	112
<i>Baltimore Oriole</i>	224	<u>120</u>	112	179	35	92	<u>98</u>	70	930	83%	10	1125	899	1400
<i>Purple Finch</i>		<u>1</u>		9	3	84	61	<u>1</u>	159	99%	10	161	122	200
<i>House Finch</i>	181	123	129	<u>111</u>	102	153	122	46	967	81%	10	1197	945	1437
<i>Red Crossbill</i>					<u>1</u>				<u>1</u>		0			
<i>Pine Siskin</i>										0%	3	5.2	1	50
<i>American Goldfinch</i>	436	196	271	291	200	428	383	<u>226</u>	2431	98%	10	2471	2171	3030
<i>Evening Grosbeak</i>						<u>7</u>			<u>7</u>	1750%	2	0.4	2	2
<i>House Sparrow</i>	1136	<u>1212</u>	456	303	211	354	212	<u>310</u>	4194	124%	10	3377	2816	4051
other unidentified/hybrid								17	17			22	8	77

2010 CONNECTICUT SUMMER BIRD COUNT

STATEWIDE COUNT TOTALS

Count Dates: June 6, 12-13, 19-20, and 26-27. Reported were 185 species on Count Days (CD), with all but twenty-seven of these species presumably nesting. Recorded were 114,588 CD individuals, plus four additional Count Period (CP) species. Two hundred & sixty-three observers in 140 Parties spent 1279 Party Hours (PHs) in the field. This year Pectoral Sandpiper, Gray-cheeked Thrush, and Red Crossbill were entirely new to SBCs, while King Eider is also new, but is solely a count period bird. During the last ten years 232 species have been seen on CD. Since its inception in 1991, 257 species have been reported during count days[CD], including the three species added this year, plus two additional count period species.

LOCAL COUNT TOTALS

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (*founded 1992*)

Count Dates: June 26 & 27 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 128 species, 19392 individual birds, including one hybrid. Twenty-six observers in 15 Parties spent 172 PHs in the field. Since 1992 157 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Bob Barbieri, Ray Belding, Douglas Carrier, Paul Carrier, Ayreslea Denny, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Samantha Foster, Gerri Griswold, Nikki Hall, Dennis Hannon, Seth Harvey, Vicki Hester, Leona LeJeune, Vima LeJeune, Jerry Marcellino, John Marshall, Russ Naylor, Carol Parent, Cynthia Phipps, Michael Placo, **David Rosgen** (121 Laurel Way, Winsted, CT 06098-2534; dave@whitememorialcc.org), John Shugrue, Sam Slater, Carol Youlle, and Fran Zygmunt.

Weather: 6/26- daytime: partly sunny; W winds 0-10

mph., 55° to 83°F., evening: partly cloudy, SW winds 0-8 mph., 83° to 60°F. 6/27- daytime: mostly sunny, humid, SW winds 0-6 mph. 60° to 86°F., evening: mostly clear, humid, SW winds 0-5 mph., 86° to 68°F.

Count (a rectangle, 12 mile east-west by a 17 mile north-south) Center: 41°5'N 72°59'W. Elevation: 285 to 1457 feet. Area covered: Barkhamsted, Burlington (northern 1/4), Canton, Colebrook (south half), Granby (southwest 1/4), Hartland, New Hartford, Harwinton (northern edge), Torrington (northern 1/4), and Winchester.

Greenwich-Stamford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1976*)

Count Dates: June 12 & 13 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 134 species, 24484 individual birds, plus seven count period species. Sixty-four observers in 31 Parties observed for 319.5 PHs. Since 1976, 234 CD species have been recorded, 141 of these have been found nesting

Participants: Tom Anderson, John Askildsen, Shawn Asslein, Mike Aurelia, Pat Bailey, Tom Baptist, Valentina Baptist, Kyle Bardwell, Marty Barris, Trudy Battaly, Joan Becker, Richard Becker, Joe Belanger, Gail Benson, Hank Birdsall, Michael Bochnik, **Thomas W. Burke** (235 Highland Road, Rye, NY 10580; tom.burke@mcgladrey.com), Ioa Burns, Al Collins, Annette Cunniffe, Justine Davenport, James Dugan, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Debby Ethridge, Larry Flynn, Jay Gartner, Kathy Gellman, Ted Gilman, Frank Guida, Carolyn Hartel, David Havens, Bo Hopkins, Dave Jaeger, Jalna Jaeger, Kelli Jewell, Wendy Knothe, Rory Kyle, Shaun Martin, Ken Mirman, Frank Novak, Jim O'Brien, Mary Ann O'Leary, Brian O'Toole, Gary Palmer (34 Field Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807; gejlpalmer@yahoo.com), Drew Panko, Maddie Popp, Matt Popp, Steve Ricker, Polly Rothstein, David Salmon, Meredith Sampson, Jonna Schaffer, Bob Shriber, Christine Smith, Andy Towle, Patty Towle, Matt Tozer, Larry Trachtenberg, Richard Trepp, Marvin Turner, Bill Van Loan

jr., Mike Warner, and Adam Zorn.

Weather: 6/12- daytime: SE winds, 2 mph, 58° to 78°F., decent day; 6/13- daytime: SE winds, 2 mph, 65° to 78°F., rain during compilation,

Count (a square, 15x15 mile east-west) Center: 41°05'N 73°37'W. Elevation: sea level to at least 740 feet. Area covered: in Connecticut (65% of area)- Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, and Stamford, and in New York (35% of area)- Armonk, Bedford (in part), Port Chester, Rye, and White Plains (in part).

Hartford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Count Dates: June 12 & 13 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 118 CD species & 2 CP species, 10,451 individual birds. Forty observers in 28 Parties covered over 141 PHs. One hundred sixty-one CD species have been documented since 1992.

Participants: Bill Asteriades, Steve Ballentine, Kevin Burgio, Dana Cambell, Paul Cianfaglione, Linda Clancy, Andrew Dasinger, Paul Desjardins, Gale Donnelly, Ben Egan, Peter Egan, Patrice Favreau, Sam Fried, Franl Gallo, Anne Hamilton, Dee Hanson, Eric Hanson, Ernie Harris, Matthew Hoyte, **Jay Kaplan** (71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT. 06019; jaybrd49@aol.com), Gil Kleiner, Steve Kotchko, Alex Kuzma, David Lyons, Rick Macsuga, Joy Mark, Rob Mirer, George Plough, Roger Preston, Tom Robben, Anne Romus, Mark Shapiro, Mark Szantyr, Brian Toal, Joe Valenti Jr., Joe Valenti Sr., Jon Ward, Judy Whittlesey, Mike Whittlesey, and Sara Zagorski.

Weather: daytime: 6/12- Overcast, then rain 61° to 67°F., 6/13- evening: Overcast then late clearing, 62° to 68°F.,

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41°46'N 72°40'W. (Old State House), Elevation: 40 to 640 feet. Area

covered: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Farmington (in part), Hartford, Manchester (in part), Newington (in part), Rocky Hill (in part), South Windsor, Wethersfield, and Windsor.

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count (*founded 1994*)

Count Dates: June 12 & 143 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 135 species, 17,704 individual birds. Forty-four observers in 11 Parties accumulated over 210.5 PHs. Since 1994, 175 CD species have been observed, with Blue-winged Teal a new addition this year.

Participants: Susan Ainsworth, Janet Baker, John Baker, Beverly Baldwin, **Robert J. Barbieri** (29 Evens St., #1, Torrington, CT. 06790; 1 860 482-0033), Kim Barbieri, Marcia Barket, John Barrett, Ray Belding, Tasha Casaghi, Al Cibelli, Patti Clarke, Rich Clarke, Ayersler Denny, Angela Dimmitt, Mary Donaldson, Kathy Felton, Eileen Finnan, Kevin Finnan, James Fisher, Samantha Foster, Evelyn Gelertner, Mary Gendron, John Grabowski, Gelli Griswold, Nicki Hall, Dennis Hannon, Ashley Hayes, Roger Johnson, Jim Kandefer, Marie Kennedy, Joan Lang, Brian Lorch, Caitlin MacGinitie, Gerry Marcellino, Deborah Martin, Scott Mills, Russ Naylor, Ann Orsillo, Dave Rosgen, John Shugrue, Sam Slater, George Stevens, and Fran Zygmunt.

Weather: Both days - 75° to 80°F., "Sunny and warm"

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41°43'N 73°14'W. Elevation: 450 to 1658 feet. Area covered (in whole or in part): Cornwall, Goshen, Kent, Litchfield, Morris, Sharon, Torrington, Warren, and Washington.

New Haven Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Count Dates: June 12 & 13 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 124 species, 14,588 individual birds. Forty

observers in 22 Parties spent 139 PHs in the field. Since 1991, 199 CD species have been confirmed.

Participants: Marion Aimesbury, Ralph Amodei, Christin Arnini, Mark Aronson, Bill Batsford, Larry Bausher, Steve Broker, Louisa Cunningham, Sharon Dellinger, Paul Desjardins, Natasha Domino, Ken Elkins, John Farley, Mike Horn, Carol Lemmon, Gary Lemmon, Christopher Loscalzo, **Steve Mayo** (27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524; rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net), Florence McBride, Pat McCreless, Jamie Meyers, Vanessa Mickan, Bob Mitchell, John Oshlick, Bev Propen, Frank Regusa, Nancy Ragusa, Linda Rediker, Nancy Rosenbaum, Arne Rosengren, Lee Schlesinger, Nancy Specht, Charla Spector, Steve Spector, Debbie Tenney, Pete Vitale, and Paul Wolter.

Weather: 6/12 - S winds, 0-5 mph, 63° to 74°F., overcast, light rain[0.05"]; 6/13 - NNE winds 0-10 mph., 65° to 73°F., overcast[0.1"] clearing in PM,

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41°18'N 72°56'W. Elevation: Sea level to 700 feet. Area covered: Branford (western), East Haven, Milford, New Haven, North Haven, Orange, West Haven, and Woodbridge (in part).

New Milford/Pawling Summer Bird Count (*founded 2003*)

Count Dates: June 19 & 20(Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 125 species, 7830 individual birds. Eighteen observers in thirteen parties spent 90.5 PHs in the field. Since 2003, 151 CD species have been noted, with the additions this year of American Bittern and Red Crossbill.

Participants: Barbara Butler, Bob Cartoceti, **Angela Dimmitt** (PO Box 146, Sherman, Ct. 06784; angladimmitt@aol.com), Jim Dugan, Patrick Dugan, Larry Fischer, Sibyll Gilbert, Linton Hamilton, Marge Josephson, Dennis Larkin, Bill Liedlich, Nancy Liedlich, Russ Naylor, Nancy Nichols, Jennifer Rocca, Sally Spence, Nick Thold, and Bill Wallace.

Weather: 6/19- daytime: Sunny, hot and humid, 55° to 84°F., evening: Clear, 62° to 51°F. 6/20- daytime: Sunny – hot! 66° to 88°F., nighttime: Clear, 65° to 66°F.

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41°32'N 73°34'W (Intersection of routes 68 & 157). Elevation: 30 to 600 feet. Area covered (Connecticut, 1/3 of area): Sherman, New Fairfield, New Milford (west of route 7), and portions of Brookfield & Danbury; and (New York, 2/3 of area) Patterson, Pawling, Putnam Lake, Carmel, southern Winddale, and Poughquag.

Storrs Summer Bird Count (*founded 1990*)

Count Dates: June 19 & 20 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 106 species, 7198 individual birds. Eleven observers in seven parties accumulated 90.5 PHs in the field. Since 1990, 134 CD species have been counted; 66 are nesters.

Participants: Denise Anamani, George de Leon, Christopher Demers, Kathy Demers, Marlene Dutra, Susan Hochgraf, Becky Lehmann, **Steve Morytko** (288 Varga Road, Ashford, CT 06278; smorytko@yahoo.com), Maura Robie, Steve Rogers and Phil Rusch.



*Mark Szantyr photo
Common nesting species such as
the Downy Woodpecker are the
bread-and-butter of the Summer
Bird Counts.*

Weather: 6/19- daytime: W winds 0-19 mph., 56° to 88°F., evening: W winds 0-10 mph., 65° to 70°F., 6/20- daytime: humid, brief thundershower[0.25"], W winds 0-10 mph., 62° to 90°F.,

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41°48'N 72°15'W. (Juncture of Route 195 and North Eagleville Road) Elevation: 200 to 750 feet. Area covered: Andover, Ashford, Chaplin, Coventry, Mansfield, Tolland, Willimantic, West Willington, Willington, and Windham.

Woodbury-Roxbury Summer Bird Count (*founded 1978*)

Count Date: June 6 (Sun.)

Totals: 124 species, 12,941 individual birds. Nineteen observers in 13 Parties counted during 115 PHs in the field. Since 1978, 245 CD species have been recorded, while 122 species have nested. Peregrine Falcon was a new species this year.

Participants: Renee Baade, David Babington, Polly Brody, Angela Dimmitt, Ken Elkins, Paul Elsenboss, Larry Fisher, Linda Gaboardi, Seth Harvey, Tom Hook, Anne Kehmna, Russ Naylor (44 Church Street, Woodbury, CT 06798, 203 263-2502), Theo Postvandenburg, Donna Rose Smith, Darcy Thurrott, Carol Titus, Leigh Wells, Tom Zissu, and Francis Zygmunt.

Weather: 6/6 daytime: WSW Winds, 10-15 mph., partly sunny, scattered showers[0.25"], 65° to 85°F., evening: WNW 30-35 mph., thunderstorms then windy [1.9"] and clear, 80° to 50°F.,

Count (15-Mile diameter circle) Center: 41°32'N 73°16'W. Elevation: 110 to 1060 feet. Area covered: Bethlehem, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Middlebury, New Milford, Newtown, Roxbury, Southbury, Washington, and Woodbury.

BOOKS ON BIRDS

By Alan Brush

The Wisdom of Birds. An Illustrated History of Ornithology. Tim Birkhead. 2008. x+ 433 pgs Bloomsbury, NY

Readable histories of ornithology are scarce, something like hen's teeth. Tim Birkhead, professor at the University of Sheffield, and author of six other books, has taken great strides to rectify this. This is tale of humans and birds, not just a history. He masterfully reveals the evolution of our understanding of birds and their natural history in a most unusual and charming way. Despite the subtitle it is not a picture book. The illustrations of the subtitle are limited to just over a hundred very well-selected images, all of historic interest. The book contains a preface and 10 chapters. There is also an index, end notes, a glossary and a bibliography. These reflect Birkhead's academic background and are helpful without interfering with a good read.

The main text opens with the author challenging the reader to undertake a thought experiment and return to the 16th century. This serves to introduce John Ray. Ray initiated the post-Medieval study of bird taxonomy and recognized the importance of field study of birds, two concepts still relevant today. Ray's volumes on *Ornithology* (with Francis Willughby) in 1678, and *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation*, (1691), mark the appearance of both systematic ornithology (classification and taxonomy) and field ornithology (behavior and ecology). These threads are found throughout the book and, of course, explain the derivation of the title.

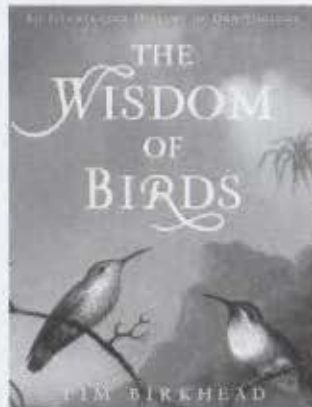
Each of the chapters begins with a narrative often describing a historical event or an anecdote that involves the author's experience with birds. Almost always it leads to a question followed by the introduction of the historical person

or persons who came up with the appropriate observation or experiment that lead to the solution (or at least a better understanding!). Birkhead employs great care to explain personal interactions and intellectual influence of the parties involved in light of the historical circumstances. In some passages the reader feels involved in a great voyage of discovery or an intriguing detective story. Birkhead shows the importance of experimental evidence even in the simplest cases and how field observation can guide speculative thinking. One example is how proximal and ultimate factors were teased apart by workers on the effects of light on inducing singing, then in the broader influence of day length on life cycles. Ultimately, the realization day length was the only environmental factor that followed a predictable course each year. The significant players realized that light triggered the onset of both migration and reproduction. Tensions regarding priority are woven into understanding the mechanisms by which changes in day length were received and how the subsequent internal manifestations are translated to complex behaviors. This, of course, is linked directly to avian endocrinology, specifics of hormone function, the discovery of internal rhythms, mechanisms of control and execution, and their adaptive significance. In some cases, events moved so fast and consequences were so profound the reader cannot fail to be impressed with the contributions a small cadre of workers made to understanding large problems that derive from a simple observation.

The problem of behavioral cues from seasonal changes in day length expands even further. The challenge is to figure out how a species (in the specific case of Great Tits) laid their eggs so that the period of chick feeding coincides with the period when caterpillars (the prey) were most abundant. Even today, the relationship in many areas is relevant as it is disrupted by climate change. Timing, of course, is both heritable and subject to natural selection; the story continues. Similar narratives are established for instinct and intelligence (Ch 3) the importance of field work in the discovery of the kinds and functions of territories (Ch 6), the role, production,

and environmental conditions in the production of bird song (Ch 7), sex (Ch 8), infidelity (as sexual selection) (Ch 9), and reproduction and longevity (Ch 10).

Birkhead writes in a style with strong historical perspective and a voice that suggests the environment of a group of convivial story tellers or a seminar. He identifies global problems such as orientation and migration, reproductive strategies, territory, dissects it, reduces it to its elements, generalizes, notes the significance of the exceptions, and develops the history of what now seems to be rational explanation. He includes personalities, their contributions and blunders, as he develops first the recognition of the problem (it wasn't all as Aristotle wrote), by asking who asked the pertinent question or made the timely summarization that led to more questions, new thinking, and showed the way to additional work. He also points out that it still may "take a major shift in our thinking to resolve (a) particular: it may happen tomorrow, it may take a decade, or even a century".



CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Spring, March 31 through May 31, 2010

Compiled by Greg Hanisek

This spring continued a theme that appears to be emerging as the new reality. An advanced season brought early arrivals from across the phylogenetic spectrum. This seasonal report is peppered with record and near-record early arrival dates. The first noteworthy cluster appears as a significant handful of early outliers centering on April 2-5. Then, in a period centered on April 30-May 1, the floodgates opened. A large majority of regularly occurring wood-warbler species were present in the state by the end of the day on May 1. Then a number species that usually arrive later in the month showed up before the end of May's first week.

The following is a list of first arrival dates for a variety of regularly occurring species: Northern Gannet - March 23 in Stratford (TL, FMA); Least Bittern - May 5 in South Windsor (RMi); Snowy Egret - April 2 in Stratford (SK); Little Blue Heron - April 7 in Madison (PDe); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron - April 4 in Stratford (FMA, LM); Glossy Ibis - March 20 in Madison (NBa); Clapper Rail - March 30 in Stratford (FMA); Piping Plover - March 18 in Old Lyme (HG); American Oystercatcher - March 2 in Milford (NBo); Lesser Yel-

lowlegs - April 3 in Stratford (SK); Spotted Sandpiper - April 24 in East Hartford (JVa); Willet - April 21 in Stratford (TL); Pectoral Sandpiper - March 20 in Madison (NBa); American Woodcock - March 4 in Colchester (AP) and Hamden (CZ); Common Tern - May 2 in Madison (JMu); Least Tern - May 4 in Stratford (CB); Black-billed Cuckoo - May 4 in Derby (RH); Yellow-billed Cuckoo - May 1 in Glastonbury (BA); Chimney Swift - April 13 in Stratford (FMA); Ruby-throated Hummingbird - April 20 in Guilford (LG); Common Nighthawk - May 5 in Col-



Tom Sayers

The first raucous call of the Clapper Rail is one of Connecticut's less-well-known signs of spring. This one slinked into the open on May 21 in Madison.

chester (PH); Whip-poor-will - April 22 in Ellington (CEk); Least Flycatcher - May 1 in Madison (JCo) and Greenwich (CEH); Eastern Phoebe - March 18 in Hamden (CZ); Yellow-throated Vireo - April 30 in Fairfield (AB, SK); Warbling Vireo - April 26 in Ellington (CEk); Red-eyed Vireo - April 30 in Greenwich (SMu); Tree Swallow - March 9 in Guilford (JRe); N. Rough-winged Swallow - March 27 in Norwalk (LT).

House Wren - April 19 in Ellington (CEk); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - April 11 in South Windsor (PDe) and Milford (SS); Veery - May 1 in Washington (DBa); Wood Thrush - April 21 in Stratford

(BW); Blue-winged Warbler - April 30 in Ellington (CEk) and Fairfield (SK); Tennessee Warbler - May 7 in Hamden (MSc); Nashville Warbler - April 30 in Guilford (DP); Northern Parula - April 11 in New Haven (WG); Yellow Warbler - April 29 in East Granby (BK); Chestnut-sided Warbler - May 1 in Fairfield (SK); Magnolia Warbler - May 1 in Fairfield (SK); Black-throated Blue Warbler - May 1 in Waterbury (GH) and Hamden (MSc); Black-throated Green Warbler - April 13 in Lyme (JK); Blackburnian Warbler - April 30 in Fairfield (AB); Pine Warbler - March 15 in Hartford (DC); Prairie Warbler - April

11 in Hamden (MSc), Palm Warbler - April 6 in Stratford (BW); Cerulean Warbler - May 1 in East Lyme (DW), Chester (TE) and Kent (SA); Black-and-White Warbler - April 21 in Stratford (BW) and New Haven (RH); American Redstart - April 30 in Stamford (MMc); Worm-eating Warbler - April 30 in Guilford (DP); Northern Waterthrush - April 24 in East Granby (PCi); Louisiana Waterthrush - April 3 in Danbury (BO); Wilson's Warbler - May 4 in Madison (JHo); Canada Warbler - May 1 in Fairfield (SK); Scarlet Tanager - April 30 in Guilford (JCo) and Hamden (MSc); Seaside Sparrow - April 29 in Stratford (FMa); Rose-breasted Grosbeak - April 28 in Woodstock (KG); Indigo Bunting - May 3 in Windsor (PDe); Bobolink - April 30 in Hamden (JOs); Orchard Oriole - April 30 in Derby (RH)

Two **Greater White-fronted Geese** were at a pond in North Haven on March 4 (CM); two were in Wallingford on March 10 (MBA); and a surprisingly late one was at Rentschler Field in East Hartford on May 10 (NC, THo,

JVa). A major flight of c 2000 Brant passed over Greenwich on May 20 (LT), and a flock of 65 northbound Snow Geese flew over Fairfield on May 21 (DV). Two **Trumpeter Swans** of unknown origin offered easy viewing at Cranberry Pond, Stratford, from March 28 through April 1 (BW, m.ob.). For more information on their status and possible origin, see the 15th Report of the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (The Connecticut Warbler, Vol. 30 No. 3).

Four Eurasian Wigeon for the season included singles at Kelsey Island, Branford (BDr), and Woods Pond, Norwalk (MDi), which are not among regular locations for this species. Reports of 10 Northern Shovelers included three each at the warehouse pond at McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Stratford, on March 13 (FMa) and at Milford Point on March 27 (NBo), plus two at Sherwood Island State Park, Westport, on March 16 (TG). A drake was unexpectedly late May 28 at McKinney (SK). The season's only **Eurasian Teal** was at Milford Point on March 12 (JMa).

The rapidly increasing reports of Common Eider included 5 on March 14 at Harkness Memorial State Park in Waterford (NBo et al.) and record spring concentration of 20 immature males on rocks just west of Tuxis Island in Madison on May 3 (FG). The drake **Harlequin Duck** present during the winter season on the Farmington River in Farmington remained until at least March 1 (SJ et al.). Three Black Scoters were on Bantam Lake, Litchfield, on April 9 (JE). A raft of 6000 scoter sp. was off Stratford Point on March 2 (TL). Four Long-tailed Ducks were on West Hartford Reservoir No. 6 on April 9 (PCi), and a flock of 550 was off Long Beach, Stratford, on April 5 (GH, BBa). A flock of c. 2000 Common Goldeneye gathered off Stratford Point on March 5 (CB, BDe). A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** was at Penfield Reef in Fairfield on March 5 (BW). It was joined by a male the next day (LT). A flock of c. 5000 Common Mergansers was at Lake Waramaug in New Preston, an annual staging site, on March 15 (RBe).

Away from the northwestern part of the state, Ruffed Grouse were reported from East Glastonbury on April 3 (BA) and most surprisingly from Barn Island, Stonington, on May 3 (BJ). A group of 110 loons (50 Red-throated Loons, 15 Common Loons and 45 unidentified) was off the Lordship seawall in Stratford on April 21 (FMa). Reports of eight Red-necked Grebes included two at Penfield Reef, Fairfield, on April 5 (JRa). A flight of 400 Double-crested Cormorants passed Seaside Park, Bridgeport, in about an hour on April 17 (CB). Three Great Cormorants were far up the Connecticut River at Glastonbury on March 20 (BA et al.). A migrant American Bittern worked the edges of the Access Road pool in Stratford on March 18 (FMa). At least three were found at two locations at White Memorial Foundation, Litchfield, a breeding area, on April 24-25 (MDo, DRo). A Great Egret on March 21 at Station 43 in South Windsor was early for an inland location (PDe). A Little Blue Heron was a good inland find on April 8 in Woodbury (RB, THo). The season's only Tricolored

Heron arrived April 11 at Sandy Point, West Haven (FG). Five Cattle Egrets for the season, a high count by recent standards, consisted of one on April 8 in Stamford (BI et al.); two April 21-23 in Chittenden Park area in Guilford (JMh et al.); one in Greenwich on May 1 (RTr); and one at the Portland fairgrounds on May 10-12 (LN, JL).

Ospreys seem to arrive earlier every year. One was fishing at North Farms Reservoir in Wallingford on March 4 (MMo). The first report of one on a nest platform came from Clinton on March 17 (FR). The first **Mississippi Kite** report came on May 16 at Great Pond in Simsbury (FG,) and eventually breeding was established for a second consecutive year (JWe et al.). A Broad-winged Hawk was an early arrival March 16 in Woodbridge (DSm), followed by singles March 19 in both Seymour and Derby (BBa). When does breeding begin for our resident hawk species? For a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks in Mystic, copulation occurred March 6, when one also was seen carrying nesting material

(JRe). Two dark morph **Red-tailed Hawks** for the season provided rare confirmation of individuals of western origin. One that wintered along the Interstate 691 corridor in Cheshire and Meriden was last reported on March 16 (GH et al.), and another was seen and photographed March 10 in Wilton (PCo). Raptor expert Brian Wheeler, a Connecticut native, aged the Wilton bird as a juvenile from the photos. An adult Golden Eagle was an unexpected flyover in Norwich on March 21 (DP). A pair of Peregrine Falcons was seen copulating on a billboard along Interstate 84 in Waterbury on March 19 (GH).

Early (wintering?) Virginia Rails were at well-known breeding areas at Station 43 in South Windsor on March 17 (SZ, RMi) and at Little Pond in Litchfield on March 27 (DRo). A **Common Moorhen** was a good find at Hart Pond in Cornwall on May 22 (FZ). Four **Sandhill Cranes** for the season included one in Durham March 20-21 (DRa et al.), one in flight at Portland on May 1 (JBu); and two passing over Windsor on May 15 (JWo).

Single American Golden-Plovers, scarce spring migrants, were at Neck Road in Madison on May 6 (FMc, NR) and at HBSP on May 8 (PDe). Glastonbury Meadows produced a high count of 15 Spotted Sandpipers on May 2 (BA). An early Solitary Sandpiper visited Little Pond in Litchfield on April 2 (JMa). A "western" Willet that wintered at Johnson's Creek in Bridgeport remained until at least March 2 (BW et al.). Three Upland Sandpipers were first noted April 22 at Rentschler Field in East Hartford (JVa). A Least Sandpiper was early April 12 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, hereafter HBSP, (GH, BBa). A White-rumped Sandpiper, a species usually most numerous at the back end of spring migration, was early on May 4 at HBSP (RTr). An early Short-billed Dowitcher was at Stratford Great Meadows on April 4 (TG), and one was inland at Little Pond in Litchfield on May 25 (DRo). Farmington Meadows held 67 Wilson's Snipes on April 3 (PCi). Two young fledgling American Woodcocks were found April 27 in Shelton (CB). About 2000 shorebirds

of 12 species were at Milford Point on May 21 (FMa).

The first of eight **Black-headed Gulls** for the season, a good total by recent standards, were at Holly Pond, Stamford (PDu), and Short Beach, Stratford (FMa), both on March 10. About a dozen Iceland Gulls and half that many Lesser Black-backed Gulls were reported for the season. A second-cycle Glaucous Gull that wintered at Long Beach in Stratford was present until at least May 7 (FMa). What was presumably the same individual stayed at the same location through May the previous year. After several reports in eastern Long Island Sound during the winter, one **Black-legged Kittiwake** was just outside Norwalk harbor on March 14 (JWa). The species is rare anywhere in the Sound but especially so far west. Two Caspian Terns were a nice find inland at Bantam Lake, Litchfield, on May 22 (FZ et al.), and three were in Guilford the next day (PCo et al.). Six Forster's Terns flew by Seaside Park in Bridgeport on May 15 (FG). Two Black Skimmers, the season's only reports, were at Long Beach

in Stratford on May 23 (FMa, LM).

Two Mourning Doves had already fledged by April 20 in Westport (FMa). A Long-eared Owl called on April 8 in Chaplin (PR) and a possible breeding pair was noted May 23 in the Connecticut River Valley (FG et al.). The only Short-eared Owl report came from Stratford Point on March 18 (MBu). A **Red-headed Woodpecker** made a brief pass through a Westbrook yard on April 14 (TT), and one visited a peanut feeder on May 12 in East Hartford (JBr fide JVa).

An early Olive-sided Flycatcher on May 7 (RPa) and a very early Eastern Wood-Pewee on May 2 (MSc et al.) were both at East Rock Park in Hamden. Willow Flycatchers joined the parade of unusually early flycatcher arrivals with reports from May 7 in Milford (BW) and May 8 at HBSP (PDe). The first of five Yellow-bellied Flycatcher reports was on the more seasonable date of May 16 in Goshen (KFi). However, a Great Crested Flycatcher on April 20 in Westport was one day later than the record-early arrival date (FMa). The season's only Northern



Bruce Finnan
Birders seek out staging flocks of Bonaparte's Gulls in March and April in order to search for less common species, but the handsome "bonies" are worth attention themselves. These were at Southport Beach on April 15.



Bruce Finnan

This first-cycle Glaucous Gull, photographed on March 6, was one of at least two seen at Long Beach in Stratford during the season.

Shrike was in Litchfield on March 23 (DRo). A record early White-eyed Vireo at HBSP on April 3 was part of the precocious arrival of passerines (SZ, JCo) that also included an early Blue-headed Vireo on April 5 in Bloomfield (PDe). The early vireo prize, however, goes to a closely observed singing Philadelphia Vireo on the record-early date of May 8 in Salem (DBi). This species is hard to find in spring and usually arrives late in the month. The only other report, on May 17 in Goshen (KFi), was even on the early side.

Two pairs of Horned Larks

were singing on territory on April 24 at Bradley International Airport in Windsor (PCi). Two Cliff Swallows were back at a nesting site at Stevenson dam in Oxford on April 20 (KE). A nesting pair of Common Ravens on West Rock Ridge State Park in Woodbridge began incubating March 7 (SBr). A House Wren singing and inspecting nest boxes March 10 in Branford was about a month early and may well have wintered locally (CLe, GL). A Marsh Wren seen on at least two occasions in the first two weeks of March at Station 43 in South Windsor probably wintered at that site or nearby (SZ). The first Swainson's

Thrushes were early on May 4 at Walker's Pond, Milford (C&SS) and at East Rock Park (JOs). The typically skimpy six reports of Gray-cheeked (type) Thrushes included a first arrival May 10 in Suffield (PDe).

▲ Brewster's Warblers were in West Hartford on May 2 (DSc) and May 24-27 (SBa, SF). The season's only Lawrence's Warbler was at Greenwich Audubon Center on May 1 (RTr). An Orange-crowned Warbler, seldom detected in spring, was at Nepaug Reservoir in Burlington on May 8 (DL). The first two of nine Cape May Warblers reported for the season were in a Hamden yard on May 4 (KB). A singing male **Yellow-throated Warbler**, on territory in Pachaug State Forest in Voluntown for a third straight year, was first noted April 24 (BDw). A migrant was found April 11 at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (LT). Blackpoll Warblers arrived well ahead of their historic schedule, with the first one on May 1 in Waterbury (GH) quickly followed by several others. Bay-breasted Warbler was right on their heels with

a first report May 2 from Canton (DTr). A record early Ovenbird was seen on April 2 at Northwest Park, Windsor (PF), when there were also two reports of heard-only birds in other parts of the state. This early migratory push deposited a record early Hooded Warbler on April 3 at HBSP, where it remained until at least April 10 (RPr, m.ob.). More typical migrant Hoodeds arrived at several locations during the April 30-May 1 flight (RH et al.) Three Kentucky Warblers for the season were singles May 4 in Guilford (JCo), May 18-19 in West Hartford (PCi et al.) and May 20 in Preston (DP). It was a good season for Mourning Warblers, with 25 reported after a first report May 10 at East Rock (JHo). Yellow-breasted Chats were at Lighthouse Point in New Haven on April 30 (FW) and at Smith Richardson Preserve in Westport on May 2 (RTr).

An often-seen wintering Vesper Sparrow was still in South Windsor on March 20 (PDe), and one at Glastonbury Meadows on March 20 also likely wintered (BA et al.). A Grasshopper Sparrow, a species seldom found away

from the state's few breeding sites, was a nice surprise May 4 at Sherwood Island (TG, NBo). Several were found at Bradley International Airport, a nesting site, the same day (RTE). The Sherwood bird was still present May 5, and another migrant was singing on May 8 at Cove Island, Stamford (PDu). **Summer Tanagers** were re-

ported from the Connecticut College Arboretum in New London on April 23 (BC) and from a landfill in Stonington on April 28 (BJ). Three **Blue Grosbeaks** for the season were a single bird on May 22 along the canal greenway in Hamden (MSc) and a male and a female together on May 22 in Norwalk (LF).



Tom Sayers

Migrant Grasshopper Sparrows are rarely found here in spring. When located, they're usually already on territory. That appeared to be the case with this one on April 29 in Somers.

Away from the Stratford breeding colony, a male Boat-tailed Grackle displayed on April 2 at HBSP (BK) and was still present, but with no sign of a mate, on May 8 (PDe). Single Baltimore Orioles visited feeders in Wallingford (fide CZ) and Westport (JG) in late March, well ahead of normal migratory arrival dates. There were a few reports of single Pine Siskins visiting feeders in March and early April. An Evening Grosbeak stopped at a feeder in Wallingford on April 15 (NG)

Observers - Sharon Abner, Marion Aimesbury (MAi), Jayne Amico, Mark Aronson (MAR), Bill Asteriades, Renee Baade (RBa), David Babington (DBa), Steve Ballentine (SBa), Bill Banks (BBa), David Barans (DBr), Nick Barber (NBa), Charles Barnard, Scott Baron (SBn), Mark Barriger (MBA), Ray Belding (RBe), David Bingham (DBi), Bob Bitondi (BBi), Nick Bonomo (NBo), Jane Bradley (JBr), Steve Broker (SBr), Joe Budrow (JBu), Milan Bull (MBu), Alex Burdo; Kevin Burgio, Dana Campbell, Paul Carrier (PCa), Brian Chmielecki, Paul

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PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Greg Hanisek

You're looking over a large group of shorebirds on a mud flat. This isn't your strong suite. As a landlubber who lives an hour from the coast you don't see shorebirds on a daily, or even a weekly, basis. You're working hard sorting out Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs when among them appears a bird that looks, what? You can't quite put your finger on it at first, but it looks ... different. You're sure it's something you haven't seen before.

You're about to start thumbing through your field guide when you remember something another birder once told you: "The book isn't going anywhere, but the bird might fly away. Forget the book for the moment and concentrate on the bird." The same birder was always bugging you to take notes, so you decide to try it. Here's what you write:

"Fairly close in size to Greater Yellowlegs, but body rather plump; grayish-brown above; paler below; fairly large, dark upper part makings giving a scaly look; some small dark scallops below; bill medium length, fairly thick at the base with a drooping tip; legs grayish-green; tail barred and flopping loosely in the breeze."

You did fairly well except for the "tail" part. You remembered most of the stuff your nagging friend liked to blather on about, but you did neglect to get a good grip on bird anat-



omy. Those were the tertials you saw flopping in the breeze, not the tail. They're long, often barred and really floppy on a Ruff, a great find in Connecticut. You had seen a Ruff before, but that one was a male in its bizarre and spectacular breeding plumage. It looked nothing like this one, and you do recall you're friend mentioning how important it is to be aware of the range of plumages possible in a given species

You really weren't sure what you were looking at, but the rest of your description supports this identification. The size and shape compared to the Yellowlegs, along with the unique bill shape, the irregular breast markings and the leg color all point to a Ruff in basic plumage. Consultation with your field guide, once you'd completed your description, bears this out. In fact, the Sibley guide, which you had with you in the car, offers this gem, which makes you smile: "Scapulars often stick up over round back." You noticed some messy feathers in that area but didn't think they were significant. Your friend's voice intrudes quietly once again: "Take note of *everything*."

This Ruff, found by Frank Mantlik on the flats of the Saugatuck River in Westport, was present from April 18 to May 7, 2008. The photograph, showing protruding scapulars, was taken by Meredith Sampson. The bird was believed to be a male based on its fairly large size. Males average 20 percent larger than females.



Photo Challenge No. 71

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Illustrations and photographs are needed and welcome. Line art of Connecticut and regional birds should be submitted as good quality prints or in original form. All submitted materials will be returned. We can use good quality photographs of birds unaccompanied by an article but with caption including species, date, locality, and other pertinent information.

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Connecticut Ornithological Association
314 Unquowa Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
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Printed at Yale University

Non-Profit Org.
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