

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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CONTENTS

- 1 **The 2018 Summer Bird Count**
Joe Zeranski, Patrick Comins and Tom Robben
- 24 **Northern Goshawk**
Greg Hanisek
- 28 **Connecticut Field Notes**
Greg Hanisek and Frank Mantlik
- 34 **Photo Challenge**
Aidan Kiley

ON THE COVER

Cape May Warbler

One of the unusual wintering birds in 2018-19 is a Cape May Warbler in a sheltered spot in Westport. Paul Carrier imparted his distinctive style to this month's cover species.

THE 2018 SUMMER BIRD COUNT

By Joe Zeranski, Patrick Comins and Tom Robben

Introduction

The Summer Bird Count (SBC) is our most intensive inventory of breeding birds in Connecticut. This volunteer led effort, now in its 27th year, helps us to gauge the changing status of breeding birds in the state and provide insight into the dynamic nature of the distribution and status of our breeding birds. This year's effort was especially important as it coincided with a new project to atlas Connecticut's birds in the breeding and other seasons. Many observers collected data for the atlas project alongside their SBC data. As the results emerge from the new effort it will be interesting to see how well our SBC data captured the range expansions and contractions that the new atlas will undoubtedly show. The preliminary results indicate that we already had a good idea of which species were expanding their ranges and which were contracting thanks to the data you have collected over the years. Thank you!



Julian Hough photo
Peregrine Falcon was one of several raptors to appear in record numbers on the 2018 count.

State listed species are marked as (E) for endangered, (T) for threatened and (SC) for special concern. Details on any potential breeding state-listed species should be reported to the state's Natural Diversity Database in addition to being recorded for the count.

Results

This year 164 count-day species were recorded. This is a new 10-year low well below average (91%) and 15 less than the last year's count. Lingering waterfowl and late migrants seemed to be in short supply. Two additional count period species were observed: **Gadwall** in Litchfield Hills of all places and **Northern Bobwhite** in Woodbury/Roxbury. Litchfield Hills again had the most species with 132 and Storrs the fewest with 106. There were 255 observers, in 170 parties. The number of observers was down by eight compared with last year, but the number of parties was up by 18. Volunteers tallied 1373.75 party hours, with 1322.25 being daylight hours and 51.5 night hours; just about average for all of three totals.

There were 100,594 individual birds recorded, which is 11,559 below last year's total. The ten most abundant species were, in descending order: **American Robin**, **European Starling**, **Red-winged Blackbird**, **Gray Catbird**, **Common Grackle**, **House Sparrow**, **American Goldfinch**, **Canada Goose**, **Red-eyed Vireo**, and **Song Sparrow**. This is a very similar list to last year, with **American Goldfinch** replacing **Cedar Waxwing** (13th this year).

Eight species were represented by a single individual: **Green-winged Teal**, **Ring-necked Duck**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Northern Harrier** (E), **Northern Goshawk** (T), **Common Nighthawk** (E), **Swainson's Thrush** and **Seaside Sparrow** (T).

Non-nesting Species

There were 12 species recorded on the count days that do not regularly breed in Connecticut and can be considered either late migrants or non-nesting visitors:



Mark Szantyr photo
American Goldfinch moved back into the 10 most-reported species on the Summer Bird Count, replacing Cedar Waxwing

Brant, **Green-winged-teal**, **Ring-necked Duck**, **Red-breasted Merganser**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Ruddy Turnstone**, **Red Knot** (T), **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, **Laughing Gull**, **Ring-billed Gull**, **Swainson's Thrush** and **Blackpoll Warbler**.

Additionally, one can presume the 8 **Common Loons**, all recorded from coastal counts, were non-breeders, as was the **Northern Harrier** from Greenwich/Stamford.

The underlined species are potential nesters that nest in nearby states, but in the absence of additional supporting evidence they will be considered non-nesting visitors.

Noteworthy among these: New Haven's **Green-winged Teal** was the first seen in at least ten years for that count and a statewide first since 2006. A lingering **Ring-necked Duck** was a great find for Hartford where it had not been seen on the previous ten counts. A **Red Knot** (T) in New Haven represents the fourth SBC record since 1998. The Swainson's Thrush from Greenwich/Stamford was the fifth statewide since 1998.



Julian Hough photo
Blackpoll Warbler, noted as a late spring migrant, was one of the non-breeding species found by Summer Bird Count participants.

Notable Nesting Species

Two **Soras** were found on the Hartford Count and one in New Milford/Pawling, the first for that count. New Haven had its annual **Common Nighthawk** (E), which may represent a remnant breeding population. Hartford's six **Grasshopper Sparrows** (E) were the only representatives of this regionally endangered species. **Seaside Sparrow** (T) was a great find by team New Haven. An **Eastern Meadowlark** (T) for Greenwich/Stamford was a tremendous find, one of 14 found around the state.

Species Recorded in Above Average Numbers

Teams had good luck finding **Least Bitterns** (T) this year, with five recorded from Hartford and one from New Haven, one short of the all-time high in 2001. **Black Vulture** (68), **Osprey** (194), **Bald Eagle** (T) (56) and **Peregrine Falcon** (T) (11) once again put in all-time high counts as did **Fish Crow** (218) **Common Raven** (180) and **Hooded Warbler** (77).

Species Recorded in Below Average Numbers

Twenty-four species came in at new low counts, including eight new all-time lows. Weather may have had something

to do with this, as most of the species represented are common and widespread breeders and it was an unusually rainy summer.

Species recorded at ten-year or all-time (*) low numbers

American Black Duck*	Wild Turkey	Snowy Egret* (T)	Black-crowned Night-Heron*
Sharp-shinned Hawk (E)	Spotted Sandpiper	Belted Kingfisher*	Cliff Swallow
Hermit Thrush	Wood Thrush*	Brown Thrasher (SC)*	Northern Mockingbird*
Northern Waterthrush	Blue-winged Warbler*	Common Yellowthroat	Blackburnian Warbler
Black-throated Green Warbler	Canada Warbler	Savannah Sparrow (SC)	Swamp Sparrow
Scarlet Tanager	Indigo Bunting	Red-winged Blackbird	Purple Finch

We will be keeping an eye on future counts of these species to see if any of these results are indicative of a trend of concern. Worth special mention though are the record low counts for **Snowy Egret** (T) and **Black-crowned Night Heron**, both of which been found in fewer numbers in recent years and may indicate trends of concern.

Thank you

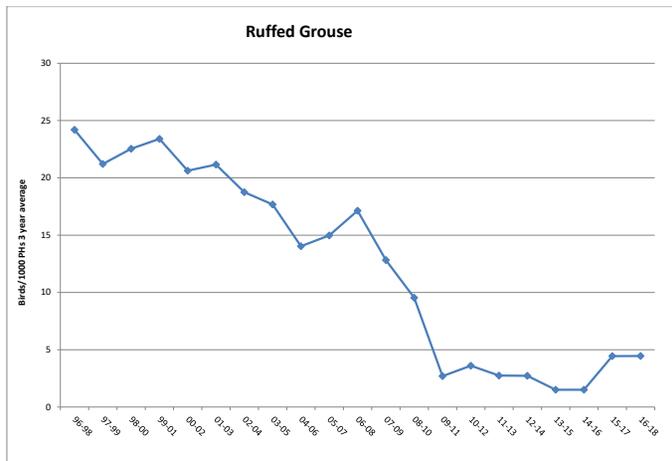
On behalf of the Connecticut Ornithological Association, we would like to thank all of the volunteer observers, captains and compilers for all of your hard work. The data that you provide is critical for understanding our summer bird abundance and distribution!

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.*

Graphs and Maps

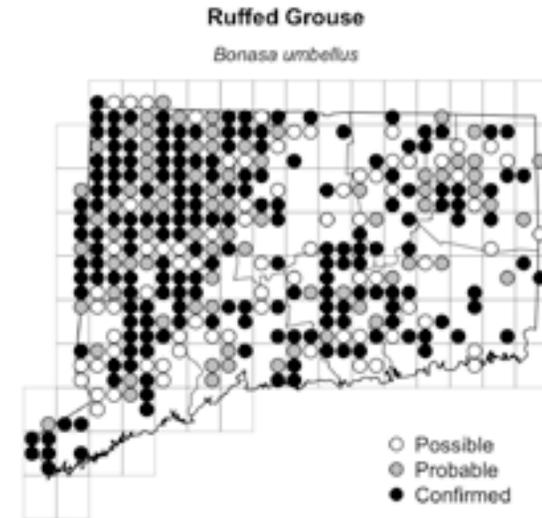
This year we are featuring species that have undergone dramatic changes in abundance over the run of the Summer Bird Count to see how well the data predicted changes in distribution between the last Breeding Bird Atlas and the modern Connecticut Bird Atlas. We are utilizing graphs that display a three-year rolling average to smooth out year to year variability and projecting the data in birds/1000 party hours. The latter helps to correct for observer effort, while preserving a similar order of magnitude to raw numbers recorded.

In addition to the traditional graphs we are presenting comparison maps between the original atlas and the preliminary maps from the first season of the new atlas. Note, the maps from the current atlas are expected to change significantly as the data from the next two seasons are collected. Caution is especially important with regard to species where range appears to have contracted since we are comparing the preliminary results of one season of data (2018) to the final results of five years of data (1982-86). It is likely that some apparent range contractions are not as serious as they look. Nonetheless, these preliminary maps indicate species we should be concerned about, and illustrate the need to complete data collection so that more complete comparisons can be made.



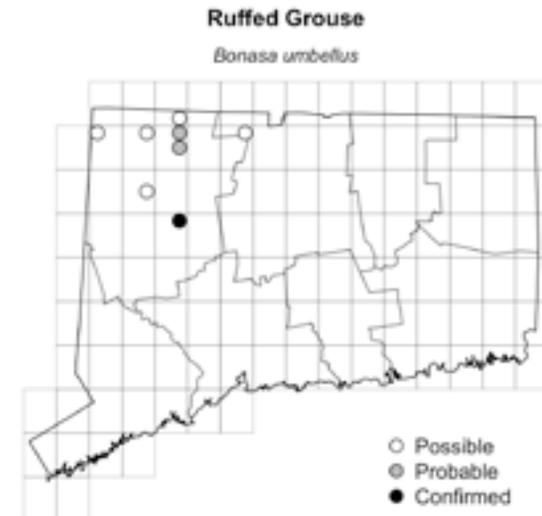
Ruffed Grouse have been much harder to find in recent years and this is reflected in the count data. This does not come as a surprise to any birder who has attempted to find them in the last decade or so.

Ruffed Grouse (Historical)

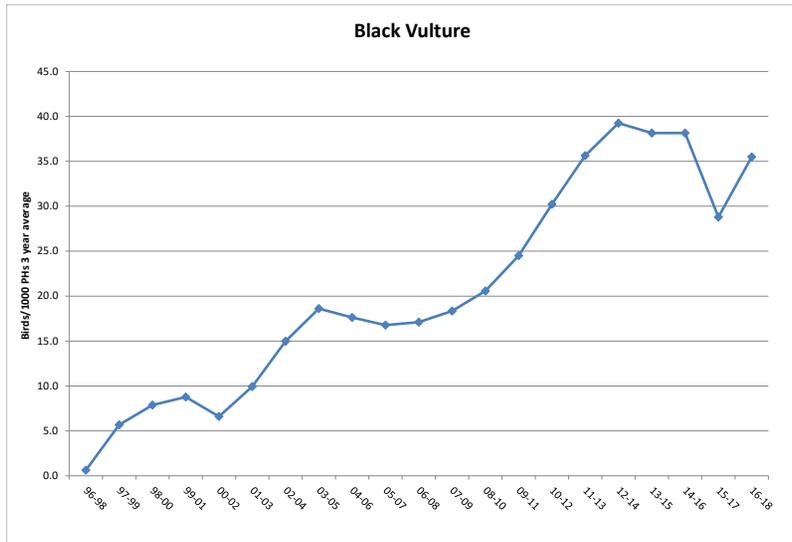


Ruffed Grouse was fairly widespread in the historical atlas, particularly in the western third of the state.

Ruffed Grouse (Modern)

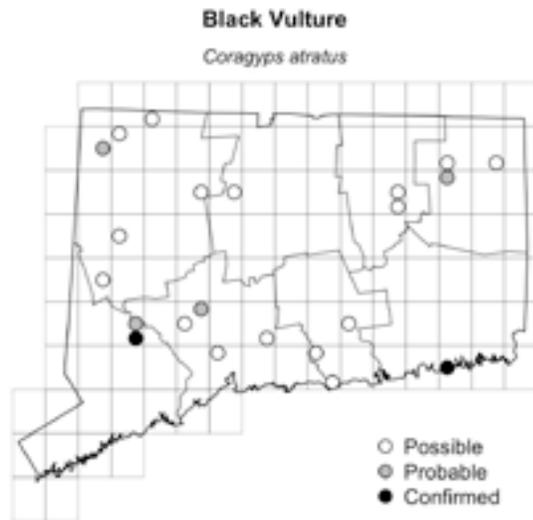


Only one block has confirmed nesting so far, with only two probable and a handful of possible occurrences. While more occurrences may be located in the remaining years, it is doubtful it will look anything like the historical map.

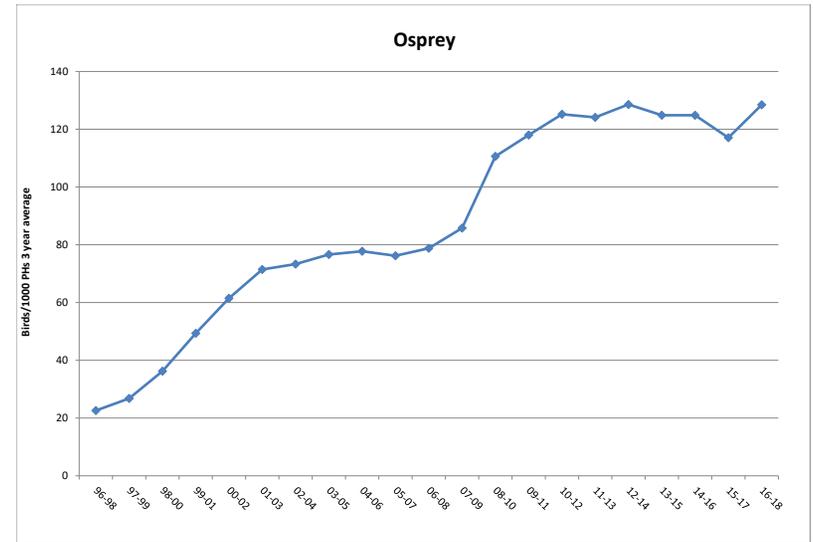


It is not surprising that Black Vulture records have increased significantly on the count.

Black Vulture (Modern)

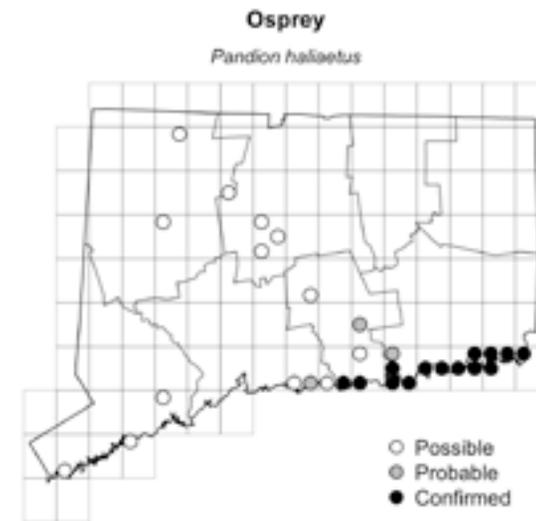


There is no historical map of Black Vulture because it was not present in Connecticut as a nesting species in the state during the historical atlas effort. So far there have been two confirmed nesting occurrences and four probable occurrences on the modern effort and the records are thin, but fairly widely distributed throughout the state.



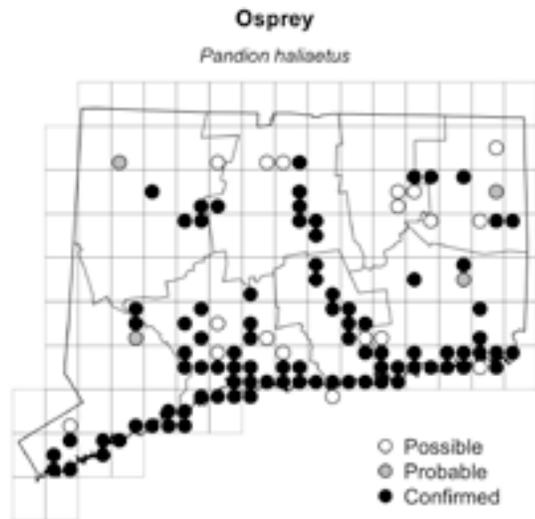
The distribution and abundance of Osprey has expanded significantly and there has been a clear upward trend in their numbers on the SBC.

Osprey (Historical)



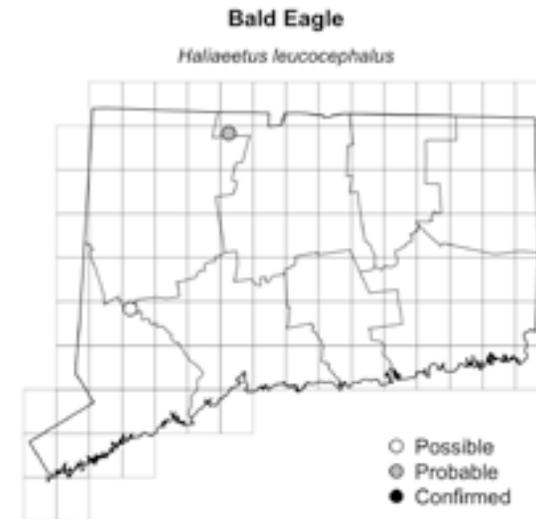
Osprey were primarily confined to the southeast coast of Connecticut in the historical atlas (1982-86).

Osprey (Modern)



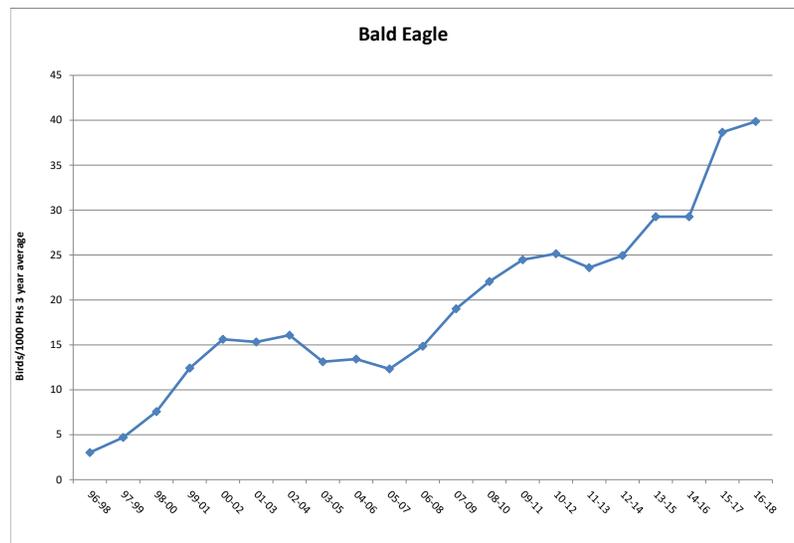
The preliminary results show a major expansion of their nesting range in Connecticut to include all of the shoreline and with confirmed nesting inland in each of the eight counties.

Bald Eagle (Historical)

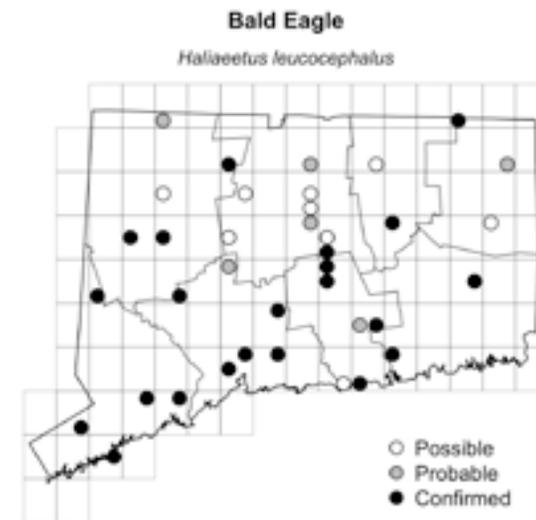


Only one probable and one possible nesting occurrence were noted on the historical atlas.

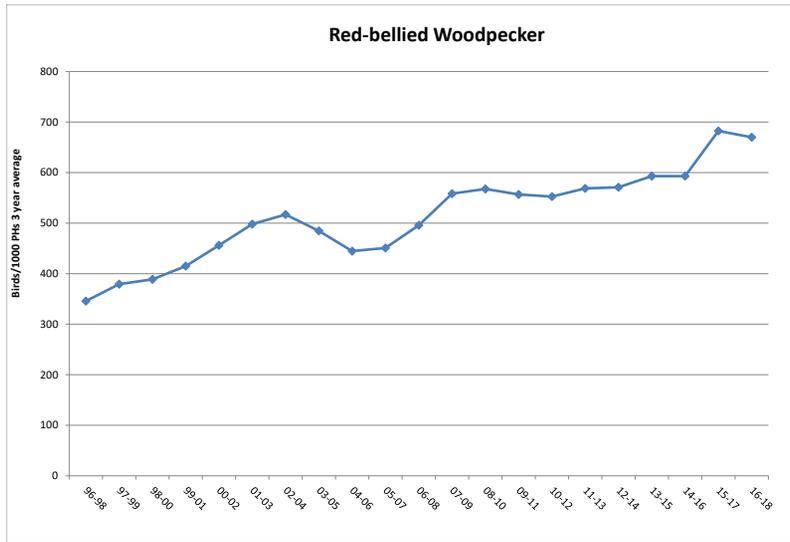
Bald Eagle (Modern)



Bald Eagles are one of the best known conservation success stories in recent decades and the count data certainly reflect this recovery.

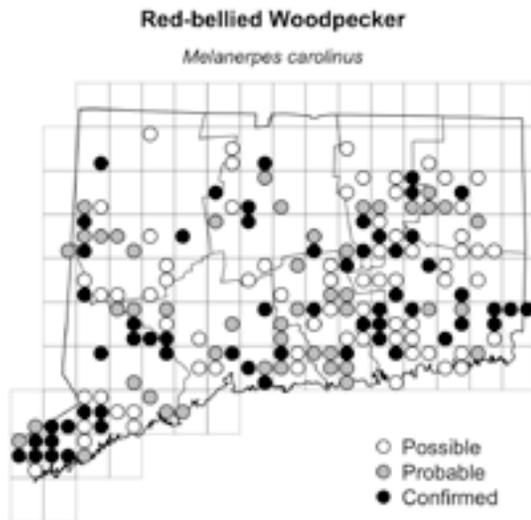


Today Bald Eagles are fairly evenly distributed throughout the state, having been confirmed in 22 blocks in the first year!



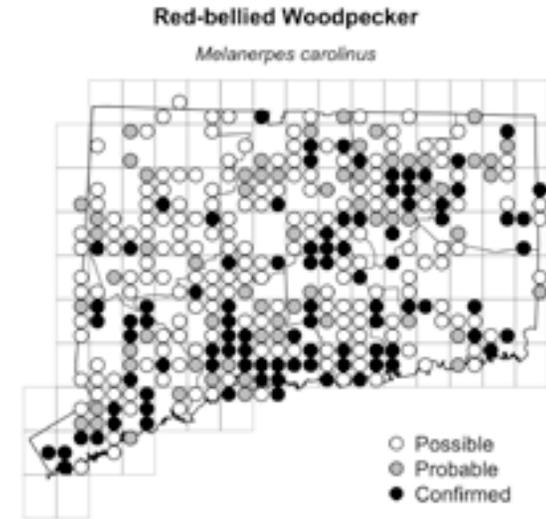
There is a modest, but clear increase in the numbers of Red-bellied Woodpeckers recorded on the count.

Red-bellied Woodpecker (Historical)

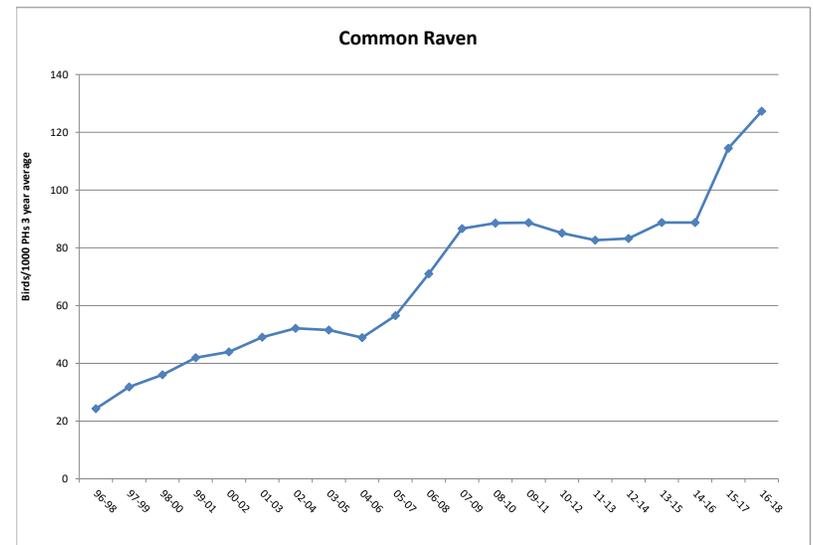


Red-bellied Woodpecker was primarily confined to the southern 2/3 of the state in the historical atlas.

Red-bellied Woodpecker (Modern)

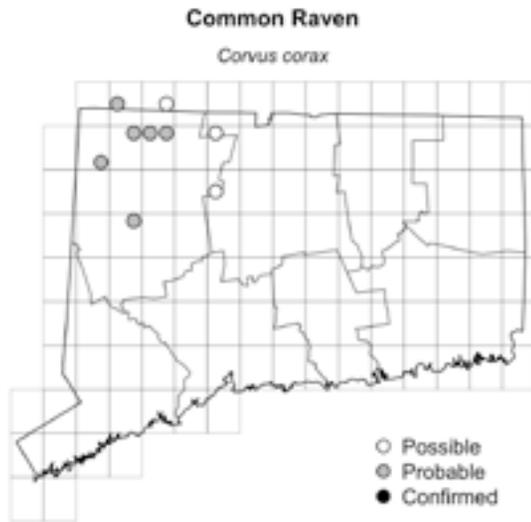


The change in distribution for Red-bellied Woodpecker appears to be fairly subtle. The species appears to be more evenly distributed throughout the state in the modern results. The change is most apparent in the northeast corner of the state.



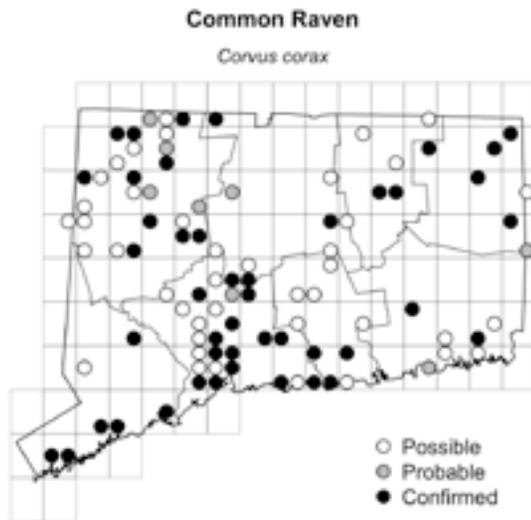
Common Raven is one of the few species (along with Yellow-bellied Sapsucker) expanding their range southward into Connecticut and this trend is readily apparent in the SBC data.

Common Raven (Historical)

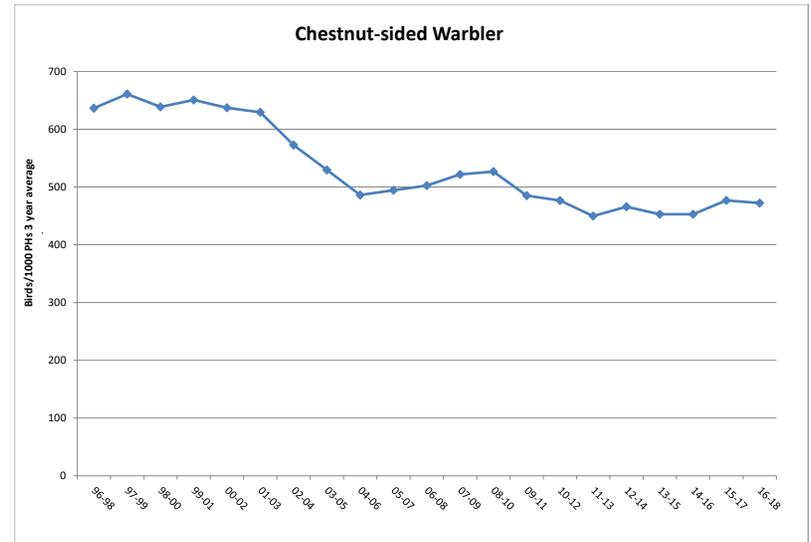


All of the records for Common Raven on the Historical atlas were in the northwest corner of the state, within or very close to Litchfield County.

Common Raven (Modern)

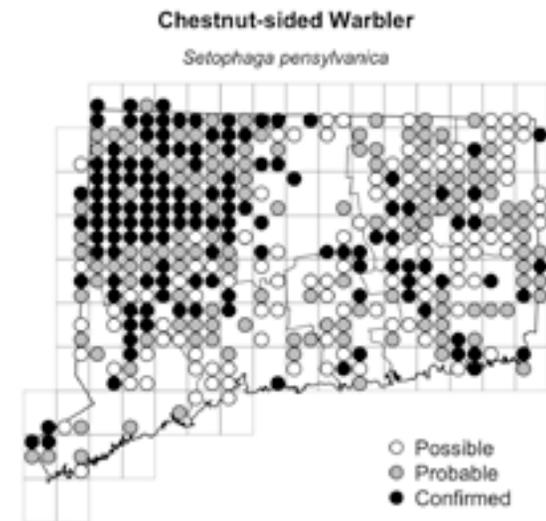


Atlas volunteers found Common Raven distributed throughout the state, even to the coast! There were confirmed records in each of the eight counties.



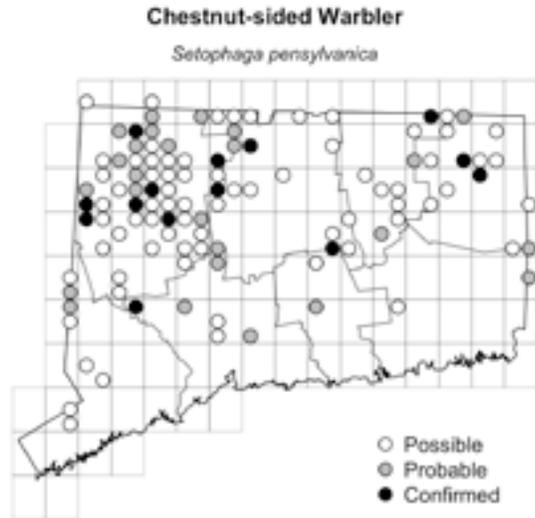
Chestnut-sided Warbler appears to have undergone a modest decline over the last twenty years of SBC data collection.

Chestnut Sided Warbler (Historical)

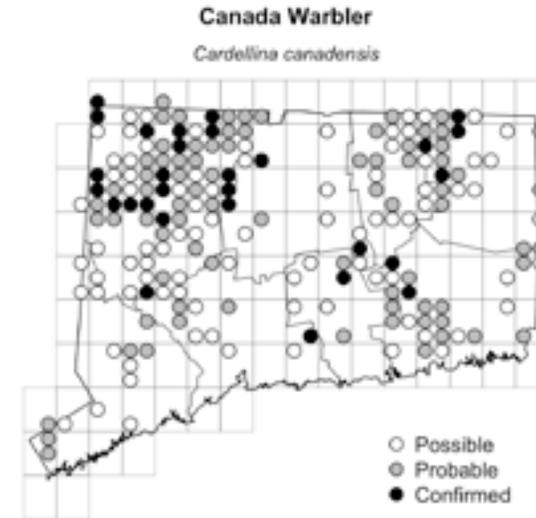


Chestnut-sided Warblers were fairly widely distributed in the state on the original atlas.

Chestnut-sided Warbler (Modern)



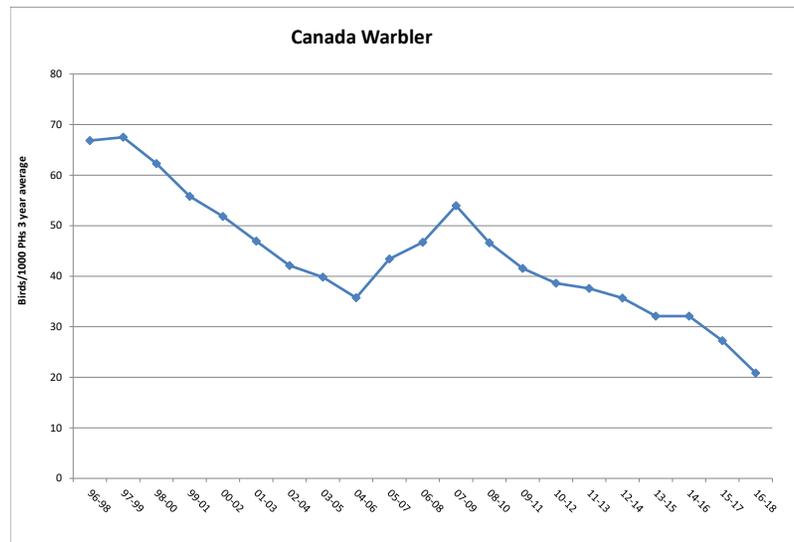
Canada Warbler (Historical)



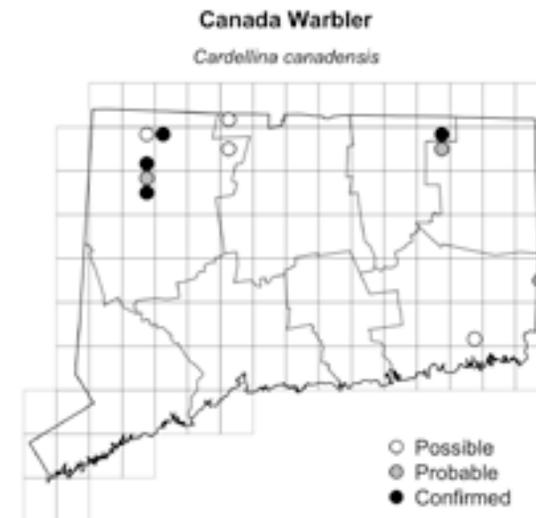
As with all of the declining species, caution is required before reading too much into the differences between historical and modern maps, but combined with the SBC data it does seem there will be a contraction of range for this species on the new atlas.

Though still uncommon, Canada Warblers were well distributed in the northern reaches of the state in the historical results.

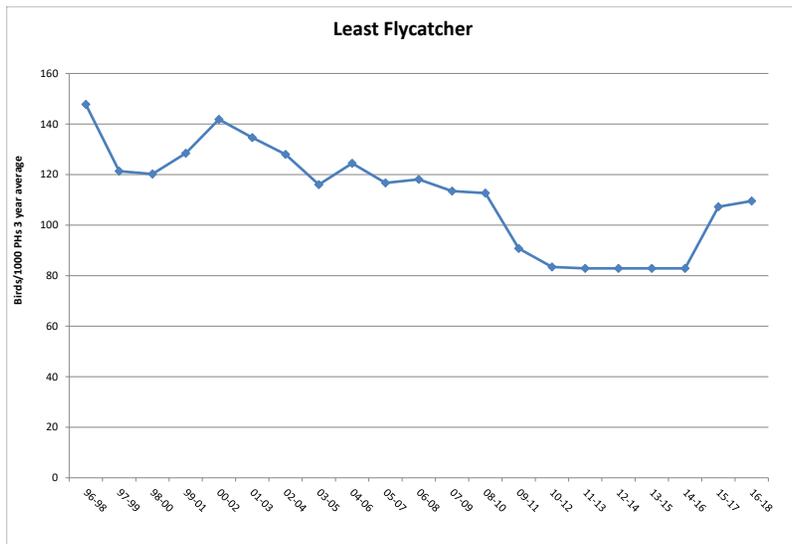
Canada Warbler (Modern)



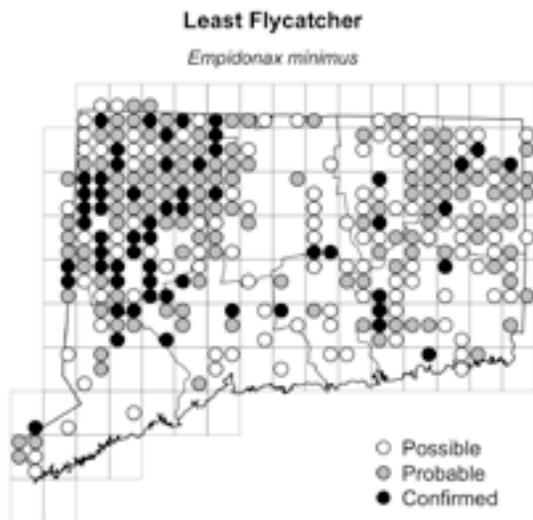
Aside from a slight bump early in the century, Canada Warbler appears to be much harder to find than in earlier SBC efforts.



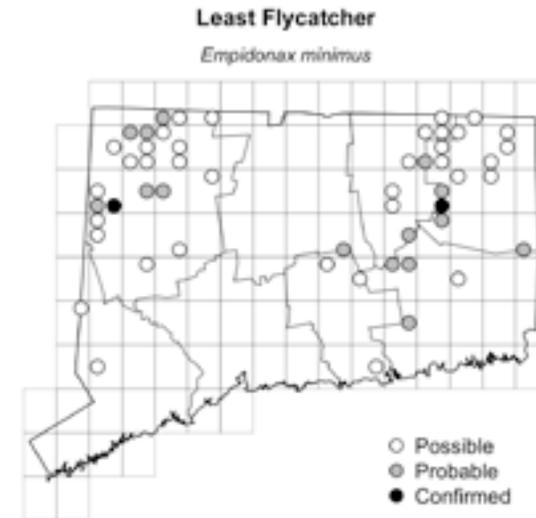
So far, participants appear to be having a much harder time finding breeding Canada Warblers than they did in the historical effort.



Anecdotally, Least Flycatcher is one of the common species for which declines appear to be most obvious in the last few decades. SBC data tend to support these observations.



Though confirmation of breeding was difficult to obtain, the state was well covered by nesting Least Flycatchers in the historical effort.



This year's results show a much more sparse distribution. While the map may fill in with additional years of data collection, it is doubtful it will match the distribution of the last atlas.

STATEWIDE COUNT TOTALS

Local SBC count areas are detailed in the *Connecticut Warbler* [36:4:140-45].

Count Dates: June 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23, & 24

Totals: 163 count day [CD] species were recorded and totaled 100,535 individual birds. Two hundred and Fifty-four observers in 170 parties spent 1353.75 Party Hours [PH] in the field.

Since 1976, 265 SBC species have been counted.

LOCAL COUNT TOTALS

Barkhamsted Summer Bird Count (founded 1992)

Count Dates: June 23 & 24 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 114 species, 20,411 individual birds. Twenty-eight observers in fourteen parties spent 212 PHs in the field. Since 1992 164 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: John Anderson, Ann Bailey, Bianca Beland, Ray Belding, Ayreslea Denny, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Sarah Emmons, Elizabeth Faber, Peter Faber, Amanda Gregg, Nicki Hall, Seth Harvey, Vicki Hester, Sean Hurley, Jim Kandefer, Leona LeJeune, Vima LeJeune, Chris Loscalzo, **John Marshall** (60 Wilson Drive, Watertown, CT., 06795, 203-232-4393, JohnMarshall@gmail.com), Russ Naylor, Carol Parent, Paul Parent, Kitty Placo, Mike Placo, Wally Placo, **David Rosgen** (121 Laurel Way, Winsted, CT 06098-2534; ctbluebird1020@gmail.com), and Sam Slater.

Weather: 56° to 74° F.,

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

Count Dates: June 9 & 10 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 127 count species and 19,363 individual birds. Forty-five observers in 32 Parties spent 295 party hours [PHs] in the field. Since 1976, 238 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: John Askildsen, Kyle Bardwell, Trudy Battaly, Joe Belanger, Gail Benson, Kelli Bochnik, Michael Bochnik, **Thomas W. Burke** (235 Highland Road, Rye, NY 10580; 914 967-4922, thomaswardburke@gmail.com), Al Collins, Annette Cunniffe, David Cunniffe, Peter Davenport, Patrick Dugan, Cynthia Ehlinger, Diane Ferber, Ted Gilman, David Havens, Jalna Jaeger, Wendy Knothe, James Leone, Ryan MacLean, Stefan Martin, Chris Mignone, **Gary Palmer** (34 Field Road. Cob Cob, Ct., 06830; 203 661-4897, gejlpalmer@yahoo.com), Drew Panko, Kenia Pittman, Ellynne Plotnick, Paul Plotnick, Matt Popp, Anna Raleigh, Anne Ribolow, Phil Ribolow. Steve Ricker, George Roussey, David Salmon, Meredith Sampson, Alan Scuterud, Bob Shriber, Ann Swain, Jory Teltser, Andy Towle, Marvin Turner, Michael Usai, Bill Van Loan, Jr., and Mike Warner.

Weather: 63° to 80°F.,

Hartford Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Count Dates: June 9 & 10 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: One hundred and ten CD species, 9,263 individual birds. Forty observers in 32 Parties covered 135 PHs. One hundred and seventy-three CD species have been documented since 1992.

Participants: Bill Asteriades, Doug Beach, Shirley Beach, Mona Cavallero, Paul Cianfaglione, John Clancy, Linda Clancy, Fran D'Amico, Andrew Dasinger, Paul Desjardins, Peter Egan, Sarah Faulkner, Patrice Favreau, David Funke, Roberta Gowing, Tina Green, Sylvia Halkin, Ernie Harris, **Jay Kaplan** (71 Gracey Road, Canton, CT. 06019; 860 693-0157, jaybrd49@aol.com), Gil Kleiner, Brian Kleinman, Steve Kotchko, Mary Lou Kramer, David Leff, Larry Lunden, Clare Mead, Jeff Olmstead, Annette Pasek, Daria Propopova, Anne Romus, Zellene Sandler, Ben Skaught, Stan Sullivan, Brian Toal, Jon Trouern-trend, Jon Ward, Jim Watso, Gail White, Judy Whittlesey, and Mike Whittlesey.

Weather: 57° to 80°F.

Litchfield Hills Summer Bird Count (*founded 1994*)

Count Dates: June 9 & 10 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 132 species, 16,118 individual birds. Thirty-three observers in 15 Parties accumulated 177 PHs. Since 1994, 177 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Judi Armstrong, Fabienne Audette, Michael Audette, Janet Baker, John Baker, Bob Barbieri, Marcia Barker, Ray Belding, Debbie Bishop, Jay Coles, Angela Dimmitt, Mary Donaldson. Mike Doyle, Evelyn Gelerter, Cathy Glasner, Ed Goodhouse, Greg Hanisek, Marianne Horn, Keith Johnson, Bill Kennedy, Marie Kennedy, Jim Kolesar, Debbie Martin, Scott Mills, Russ Naylor, Ann Orsillo, Scott Rintz, Susanna Shirlock, Sam Slater, Donna Rose Smith,

David Tripp Jr. (345 Colebrook Road, Winsted, Ct. 06098; dtrippjr@gmail.com), John Wagenblatt, David Zomick, and Fran Zygmunt.

Weather: 59° to 75°F.,

New Haven Summer Bird Count (*founded 1991*)

Count Dates: June 9 & 10 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 124 species, 9,372 individual birds; one cp bird. Forty-five observers in 23 Parties spent 186 PHs in the field. Since 1991, 202 CD species have been confirmed.

Participants: Marion Aimsbury, Ralph Amodel, Toby Appel, Christin Amini, Phil Asprelli, Bill Bausher, Larry Bausher, Steve Broker, Cheryl Capes, Nancy Clark, Louisa Cunningham, Steve Curtis, Sharon Dellinger, Devin Erickson, John Farley, Mike Ferrari, Frank Gallo, Mike Horn, Chris Howe, Derek Jezek, Kris Johnson, Lynn Jones, Pat Leahy, Chris Loscalzo, **Steve Mayo** (27 Tuttle Court, Bethany, CT 06524; 203 551-1707, rsdmayo@sbcglobal.net), Florence McBride, Sean Milnes, Gina Nickol, Mike Obrien, John Oshlick, Mary Porterfield, Bev Propen, Frank Ragusa, Nancy Ragusa, Craig Repasz, Nancy Rosenbaum, Lesley Roy, Lee Schlesinger, Arthur Shippee, Nancy Specht, Charles Spector, Steve Spector, Maria Stockmal, Marianne Vahey, and Lisa Wahle.

Weather: 64° to 78°F.

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

Count Dates: June 16 & 17 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 118 species, 8,075 individual birds. Twenty-three observers in fourteen parties spent 104 PHs in the field. Since 2003, 154 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Jim Arrigoni, Pat Bailey, Don Breeger, Alison Brion, Ioa Byrne, Barbara Butler, Binnie Chase, Jay Coles, **Angela Dimmitt** (PO Box 146, Sherman, Ct. 06784; 860 355-3429, angeladimmitt@aol.com), Jim Dugan, Jackie Eaton, Dot

Fleury, Linton Hamilton, Marge Josephson, Marie Kennedy, Dennis Larkin, Sariena Masiero, Russ Naylor, Adrienne Popko, Sally Spence, Nick Thold, Bill Wallace and Deidre Wallin.

Weather: 50° to 88°F.

Storrs Summer Bird Count (*founded 1990*)

Count Dates: June 23 & 24 (Sat. & Sun.)

Totals: 102 species, 7,360 individual birds. Thirteen observers in eight parties accumulated 111.25 PHs in the field. Since 1990 138 CD species have been counted.

Participants: Michael Curtis, Chris Demers, Kathy Demers, Marleen Dutra, Chris Elphick, Susan Harrington, Tom Harrington, **Steve Morytko** (288 Varga Road, Ashford, CT 06278-1828; 860 680-5729, smorytko@yahoo.com), Steve Rogers, Phil Rusch, Joan Smyth, Kevin Thompson,, and Doug Warner.

Weather: 56° to 75°F.,

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

Count Date: June 4 (Mon.)

Totals: 123 species, 10,606 individual birds. Twenty-seven observers in 18 Parties spent 133 PHs in the field. Since 1978, 183 CD species have been recorded.

Participants: Dave Babington, Ray Belding, Polly Brody, Robert Cartoceti, Buzz Devine, Angela Dimmitt, Ken Elkins, Morgan Evans, Ian Fernandes, Larry Fischer, Chad Hammon, Seyra Hammon, Dennis Hannon, Seth Harvey, Anne Kehmna, Dan Kehmna, Nancy Liedlich, William Liedlich, **Russ Naylor** (44 Church Street, Woodbury, CT 06798, 203 841-7779), Kate Pratt, Donna Rose Smith, Darcy Thurrott, Carol Titus, Leigh Wells, Chris Wood, Tom Zissu, and Fran Zygmunt.

Weather: 45° to 70°F.,

NORTHERN GOSHAWK

Best Identification Features Aren't The Best Known

By Greg Hanisek

What is Connecticut's most misidentified bird?

There are plenty of candidates, but I would nominate the Northern Goshawk. More specifically my nominee is a goshawk in juvenile plumage, because the adults are easy to identify. In addition to the famous supercillium (more about that later), adults have unique underparts finely barred with pale gray. No raptor found in the Northeast has that feature.

The plumage of young birds fits a pattern common to other Accipiters and some Buteos – brown overall with barred tails and streaked underparts. Observers often pass over these features because they think Northern Goshawks can be iden-



Julian Hough photo
The finely barred gray underparts, along with the dark cap and bright supercillium, make the adult Northern Goshawk a distinctive bird



Ed Haesche photo
This juvenile Northern Goshawk in flight displays the distinctive tail pattern as well as the white greater covert bar on the spread wing.

tified by a simple combination of field characters.

A description I've seen many times goes something like this: A very large Accipiter with a supercillium.

It often includes a visit to a backyard feeder – but no mention of age.

A description like that should never pass muster. But a good look should allow notation of several other features that in combination confirm a non-adult goshawk.

The good look, of course, is always a key to a difficult ID. A bird surveying your feeder would probably offer that diagnostic look, but the Northern Goshawk is a secretive woodland bird that seldom visits feeders. Claims of this sort became so regular in parts of Massachusetts several years ago that they generated an article titled "Why the Hawk Raiding Your Feeder Isn't a Goshawk."

The usual impostor is a large immature female Cooper's Hawk, but an immature Red-shouldered Hawk can also cause confusion. Both usually show a supercillium, and size is relative with nothing for immediate comparison.

With all this as prelude, a real immature goshawk, well seen, should reveal its identity without much of fight. The problem is that their rarity means few birders are familiar with them, and the species mentioned above offer decent surrogates for eager observers.

Before jumping to conclusions, run down this checklist:

Underparts. The streaking is heavy and extensive, reaching far down onto the belly with some on the undertail coverts. The ground color is usually buffy. Cooper's has the most lightly marked underside of the three Accipiters. The streaking gets finer as it goes onto the belly, and the lower belly and undertail coverts are unmarked. At the other end of the size spectrum this also helps separate it from the heavily marked juvenile Sharp-shinned Hawk.

Back. This area is intensely but regularly marked, creating what is often described as a checkered appearance. Young Cooper's Hawks have irregular white blotches on the back.

Wings. In flight immature goshawks show a white bar created by the greater coverts, and this can be seen with a good look at the dorsal surface of a perched bird. Flying birds also show a tapered wing shape.

Tail. This is the clincher. The unique pattern centers on the barring. The bars of each tail feather are offset from feather to feather, creating a wavy pattern across the tail. And each of these bars is bordered by thin white lines.

Supercillium. Its presence isn't unique to goshawks, but theirs is long and gets significantly wider from eye to nape. On Cooper's and Red-shouldered this feature is typically shorter and thinner.



Annette Cunniffe photo
 This perched posture shows the juvenile Northern Goshawk's flaring supercillium, checkered back and heavy streaking far down to the vent with some streaks on the undertail coverts

Size. Goshawks are big and bulky, but with nothing for comparison, a big female Cooper's can seem big enough. There are plenty of photos of Cooper's Hawks that were purported to be too large for anything but a Gos.

Connecticut observers have been fortunate in winter 2018-2019 to have juvenile Northern Goshawks in residence at two easily accessible coastal locations, offering opportunities to see and become familiar with this magnificent predator.

CONNECTICUT FIELD NOTES

Summer Season, June 1 to July 31, 2018

By Greg Hanisek and Frank Mantlik

As usual this report breaks down the component parts of the short but complex summer season. For additional and extensive detail on the crucial breeding component, please see the Summer Bird Count summary elsewhere in this issue and a summary of the breeding bird results of the first year of the Connecticut Bird Atlas, in the October issue of The Connecticut Warbler.

Northbound Migration

Four Red Knots were still on the move June 9 at Sandy Point in West Haven (SS), with the latest report of two June 15 at Milford Point (CW). The last three White-rumped Sandpipers were recorded on June 20 at Milford Point (CW). A **Mississippi Kite** on June 6 over Wilton, absent any signs of breeding, was probably an overshooting migrant (SMi). A very late



Janet Holt photo

This Mississippi Kite, first seen in mid-June, was part of a pair that nested in northern Fairfield County.

Common Nighthawk was seen June 11 in Woodbury (DJ). The latest report of Olive-sided Flycatcher was June 9 in Bridgewater (JD). Swainson's Thrush continued late passage on June 9 in Branford (JHa) and North Stamford (JT). An extremely late one on June 14 at Lake Wintergreen in Woodbridge was not in an area where breeding might be expected (KA)

Southbound Migration

A Northern Shoveler was an early arrival July 22 at Milford Point (CW). Several dabbling ducks, especially Northern Pintail and American Wigeon, begin to appear in late summer, but shovelers aren't usually found then. The first Whimbrel appeared July 12 at Milford Point (JOs). The first Red Knot returned there on July 22 (CW). With shorebird migration in full swing on July 26, Milford Point hosted 13 species, including 2400 Semipalmated Sandpipers and two Western Sandpipers (FM).

An early flurry of Red-breasted Nuthatches began with one June 11 in a Wallingford yard (TB). Another was at

Sherwood Island State Park in Westport on June 15 (TG) with others scattered through the season. Yellow Warblers, noted as early migrants, were very actively feeding July 19 at Sherwood Island, with c. 40 present along with two newly arrived Black-and-White Warblers (TG). A Northern Waterthrush on July 11 in Enfield was probably an early migrant (PDe).

Lingerers, Wanderers and Strays

An American Wigeon was late June 13 at Gorham Island in Westport (PL). Two Gadwalls were unusual inland, with no evidence of breeding, June 12 at Little Pond in Litchfield (MD). A Ring-necked Duck found June 13 at the same location remained through the season (MD). A female Black Scoter was off Avery Point in Groton on July 26 (DPe). An unusually high count of 13 summering Long-tailed Ducks were at Cockenoe Island off Westport on June 8 (TG). A Common Goldeneye was in Branford harbor on June 17 (TC).

A Horned Grebe lingered from late May to at least June



A.J. Hand photo

This Red-necked Grebe was an unusual mid-summer visitor to waters around Cockenoe Island off Westport.

19 at Long Beach in Stratford (FM et al.). A Red-necked Grebe was a good mid-summer find June 26 at Cockenoe Island off Westport (TG). It was seen through at least Aug. 3 (TG). A summering Great Cormorant was off Guilford on July 1 (NB, ABl). The season's first two Royal Terns were at the Norwalk Islands June 13 (ID). There were scattered reports of up to two birds during the season. The high count of Forster's Tern was three at several coastal locations in

mid-July (RS et al.). Single Black Tens were off Westport from June 19 to July 30 (NB, ABl et al.). Singles also were off Stratford Point on July 22 (TG) and off Milford Point July 31 (JHn). Black Skimmers continue visiting Long Island Sound beaches with no evidence of breeding. The high counts were 11 on June 3 off East Haven (JHa) and eight at Milford Point on June 28 (SS).

A report of one **Great Shearwater** and five **Cory's Shear-**

waters on July 24 from a New London-Orient, N.Y., ferry signaled the start of the most prolific shearwater incursion ever into Connecticut waters (DB). That news sent birders to the ferries the next day, resulting in the state's first ever three-shearwater day. In addition to Great and Cory's, the state's second record of **Sooty Shearwater** (NB et al.) was followed by four the next day (GW et al.), touching off several weeks of tubenose reports. The first report of a **Wilson's Storm-Petrel**, occasional in

Long Island Sound in mid-summer, came from the New London-Orient ferry route on July 9 (TG, JOs). Unusual for mid-summer on the coast, a flock of 17 Great Blue Herons flew in off Long Island Sound on July 19 at Westport (TG). A Yellow-crowned Night-Heron spent a week in late June at Housatonic Meadows State Park in Kent (ZA). Following the now annual spring arrival of **White-faced Ibis** along the central coast, a single bird was seen throughout June in Madison and Clinton (MK et al.).



Greg Hanisek photo

Knowledge of juvenile plumages, such as the streaked underparts of this Northern Mockingbird found in July in Waterbury, helped confirm nesting for the CT Bird Atlas.

One of the season's most noteworthy finds was a **Barn Owl** discovered in a Norfolk living room when the homeowners returned from vacation on June 7 (fide SH). The bird entered through a chimney. Single Evening Grosbeaks appeared in a West Hartford yard on June 11 (KK) and at a South Kent feeder on July 12 (BAr). With the state's breeding population of White-throated Sparrows apparently in decline, one on June 9 at Trout Brook Valley in Easton probably belongs in this category (DA). A Dickcissel was unexpected July 29 in Greenwich (AC). A single Boat-tailed Grackle was at Sherwood Island, Westport, on June 1 (TG)

The Breeding Season

Hooded Mergansers had a brood of young June 24 in a pond in Berlin (JS). Three Upland Sandpipers were present June 1 at Rentschler Field, East Hartford, and subsequently (AD). The presence of four Least Bitterns on June 9 at Glastonbury Meadows presaged confirmation of breeding (AD). A seasonal highlight was the discovery of an adult **Mississippi Kite** June 15 in Monroe. Two

were confirmed in early July, which ultimately led to discovery of a nest that fledged one young in Shelton (JHL, et al.). Peregrine Falcons successfully nested at Millstone power plant, Waterford, by June 11, the first time since 2009 (DPr).

A pair of **Sedge Wrens** confirmed as breeders at Bafflin Sanctuary in Pomfret in July were among several significant finds in the first year of the Connecticut Bird Atlas (ABO, m.o.b). Another Sedge Wren was found July 29 at the Southbury Training School farm (RN). Two Golden-crowned Kinglets were a good breeding season find June 22 in a hemlock grove in Voluntown (DPr).

A Pine Siskin, an occasional breeder in the state, visited a Monroe feeder on July 14 (JHL). A Grasshopper Sparrow was in breeding habitat June 8 at Suffield Wildlife Management Area (PDe). At Windham Airport a population of 12 included three confirmed nesters (PR). Ten were there on June 26 (PR, FG). Two Eastern Meadowlarks were on territory at Windham Airport in June (PR, FG). A Northern Parula



Chris S Wood photo

This Sedge Wren was at one of two locations, the Southbury Training School farm, that hosted this secretive species in summer 2018.

along the Farmington Canal in Hamden on June 6 was at a possible breeding location for this potential nester (JZ, DAL). The same was true for one male on June 24 and a pair on June 29 in Sterling (DPr).

Observers: Zachary Adams, DeWitt Allen (DAL), Dave Alper (DAP), Kristin Anderson-Bricker, Bill Arnold (BAr), Bill Asteriades (BAs), Tom Baptist, Allison Black (ABl), Nick Bonomo, Aaron Bourque (ABO), Steve Broker, Dan Burton, Tom Coughlan, Annette Cunniffe, Andrew Dasinger, Paul Desjardins (PDe), Buzz Devine (BDe),

Ian Devlin, Bob Dewire (BDw), Mike Doyle, Jim Dugan, Ken Elkins, David Funke, Frank Gallo, Tina Green, Joe Hanfman (JHn), Greg Hanisek, Shelly Harms, Julie Hart (JHa), Janet Holt (JHL), David Jaffin, Micky Komara, Katherine Kuchens, Chris Loscalzo, Preston Lust, Frank Mantlik, Steve Mayo (SMa), Sean Milnes (SMi), Russ Naylor, Gina Nichol, John Ogren (JOg), John Oshlick (JOs); Dylan Pedro (DPe), Dave Provencher, (DPr), Phil Rusch, Jannie Shapiro, Russ Smiley, Steve Spector, Jory Teltser, Chandler Wiegand, Glenn Williams, Sara Zagorski, Jim Zipp.

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Aidan Kiley

A number of families of spring and fall passerine migrants pose identification challenges. Vireos, characterized by their short, hooked bills, and blue feet, are certainly one of them. A total of seven vireo species have occurred in the state; six of which (excluding Bell's) are regularly seen annually. Let's take a closer look at each of the regular vireo species, comparing each to this photograph.

White-eyed Vireo is an uncommon breeder and migrant in CT. This species is easily ruled out by the face pattern. White-eyed Vireos have a bright white eye (with the exception of first-fall birds), bright yellow "spectacles", thick black bill, and bright olive coloring overall. Yellow-throated Vireo differs greatly from this bird with its bright yellow throat, yellow spectacles like White-eyed, and thick bill.

This bird shows a medium dark grayish cap which could cause confusion with Blue-headed, but other features make the difference clear. Blue-headed Vireos have a deep blue



head (not gray) which contrasts strongly with a white throat. The challenge bird shows only a slight amount of head-throat contrast. Also lacking here in this bird are Blue-headed's clear white spectacles and clean white underparts. A vagrant Bell's is also a species to consider, but note that species' very drab face pattern with little to no white spectacles and supercilium, as well as its short, fairly thick bill.

This leaves us with our three more similar, less distinctive vireos: Red-eyed, Warbling, and Philadelphia.

Red-eyed Vireo, a widespread breeder and migrant in the state, is somewhat similar in plumage, but taking a closer look, multiple features can prove that this isn't our bird. The challenge bird has a drab, nondescript look to the face. There are white arcs above and below the eye, but it doesn't show anything else that stands out. A Red-eyed, in contrast, shows a sharp facial pattern with a black eyeline that extends to the base of the bill creating a dark-lored look clearly absent here, as well as a strong white supercilium.

Red-eyed is ruled out for this bird, which leaves just Warbling and Philadelphia, two species that are not only similar in typical appearance, but the brightness/drabness of individuals of each species can cause even greater difficulty. However, careful analysis of what is visible here will bring us to a final identification. Philadelphia Vireos are brighter than Warbling, with yellowish coloring below that is brightest in the throat. This is important in separating bright Warbling, which can be quite similar to Philly. No yellow is visible on the throat on this bird, but that shouldn't bring us to an identification without checking other field marks first. Philly Vireos have a variable, but generally strong facial pattern. This bird shows a plain face pattern typical of Warbling, but not out of the realm of possibility for a drab Philadelphia. A crucial feature to look at with these two species is the color of the lores. Warbling show paler lores, while Philadelphia show fairly thick, dark lores. This bird's pale facial pattern combined with essentially no trace of dark coloring at the base of the bill, and its fairly long bill confirm the identifica-

tion of Warbling Vireo. It was photographed by Russ Smiley.

Aidan Kiley, 18, is a senior at St. Joseph High School in Trumbull. He's vice president and eBird secretary of the Connecticut Young Birders' Club.



Photo Challenge No. 104

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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Volume 39, No 1, 2019

The 2018 Summer Bird Count

Joe Zeranski, Patrick Comins and Tom Robben 1

Northern Goshawk

Greg Hanisek 24

Connecticut Field Notes

Greg Hanisek and Frank Mantlik 28

Photo Challenge

Aidan Kiley 34