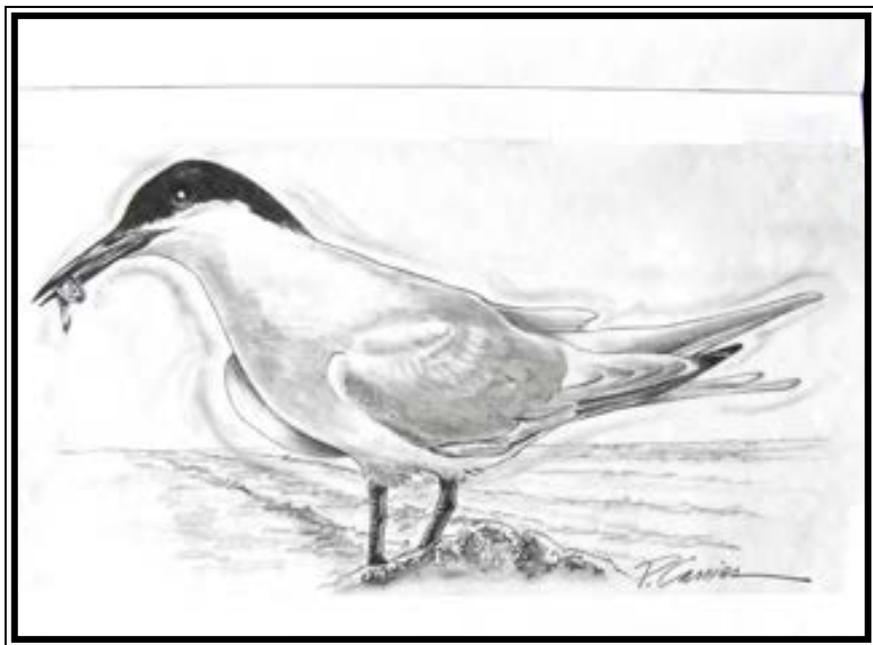


THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

A Journal of Connecticut Ornithology



The Connecticut Warbler

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ON THE COVER

Common Tern

In spring warblers get most of the attention (see Field Notes in this issue). The spring season also marks the return of terns from their wintering grounds, such as this Common Tern illustrated by Paul Carrier, a long-time contributor.

THE 2018-2019 CONNECTICUT CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Stephen P. Broker

Connecticut birders have participated in the Audubon Christmas Bird Count since its origin in 1900. The nationwide results of all past CBCs are available in the pages of *Bird-Lore* and its successor publications *Audubon Field Notes* and *American Birds*. More recently, results of historical counts have been available on-line through the National Audubon Society website. In 1981, a group of Connecticut birders recognized the need for a state journal of ornithology, and *The Connecticut Warbler* was born. Volume 1, Number 1 of *The Warbler* carried a review article on the 1980-81 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count. The article, written by Dennis Varza, discussed the results of 15 Christmas Bird Counts held in Connecticut and adjacent New York State. Dennis included brief sections on "Accidentals (winter range does not include Connecticut)", "Late Birds (normally found in this area at other times of year)", "Rare Birds (expected to be found infrequently during the winter)", and "Population Changes". Using the AOU Check-List order of that time for bird species, a table summarized the count results for 485,000 birds. A total of 166 species were seen on count days (CD), and an additional 5 species missed on count days were seen during count week (CW) periods. The count week, or count period, is defined as three days before and three days after any designated CBC count day. It is used to draw attention to those bird species that are present within a count circle but that just happened to be missed on the day of the count. In 1981, *The Connecticut Warbler* was published by the Natural History Services Department of the Connecticut Audubon Society. Carl Trichka was managing editor of *The Warbler*.

In 1984, a founding group of state birders organized the Connecticut Ornithological Association (COA), which assumed publication of *The Warbler* and received continued essential input and support from the Connecticut Audubon Society. Dennis Varza, Joe Zeranski, and especially Fred Sibley wrote

subsequent Christmas Bird Count review articles through most of the 1980s. Since those formative years and almost without interruption, *The Connecticut Warbler* has carried articles summarizing the results of the statewide Connecticut Christmas Bird Count. Five new CBC count circles have been established in intervening years, bringing the statewide total to 20 counts, consisting of 7 northern, 5 mid-state, and 8 coastal CBCs.

Statewide Results of the Christmas Bird Count.

A total of 748 field observers and 78 feeder watchers participated in the most recent, 2018-19 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count. In the process, we field observers and feeder watchers racked up some 2,020 total party hours and covered 8,850 total party miles on foot and by car and boat. We counted 270,998 individual birds, which happened to be two hundred fifteen thousand fewer than those listed in the first issue of *The Connecticut Warbler* for the 1980-81 CT CBC. On the surface, this year's count of more than a quarter million birds still seems like a substantial avian presence. Yet, this was the lowest number of individuals counted in 30 years. It pales in comparison with the 400,000 to 525,000 individuals counted each year in the 1990s and earlier. Why has there been such a decline in numbers from those birds counted some 40 years ago? Much of this fall off in numbers can be attributed to a steep decline in the numbers of European Starling over the last two decades, from a high of 151,000 starlings in 1992-93 to a low of 29,500 starlings in 2012-13, on the order of an 80% drop in European Starling numbers. Steep reductions in gull and crow numbers also have contributed to the fall off in total numbers.

But, we get ahead of ourselves. The current statewide total of 168 count day species was slightly lower than totals for the six previous CBC years (173 in 2012-13, 171 in 2013-14, 171 in 2014-15, 171 in 2015-16, 170 in 2016-17, 170 in 2017-18). Four additional species were reported this year only during count week. All are considered uncommon or rare on the Connecticut Christmas Bird Count. These count week birds were Har-

lequin Duck at Greenwich-Stamford, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Westport, Baltimore Oriole at Old Lyme-Saybrook, and Painted Bunting at Greenwich-Stamford.

Hartford usually records the highest species total among northern CBCs, and this year was no exception, with 84 count day (CD) and 3 count week (CW) species seen. Litchfield Hills was close behind, with 82 CD and 3 CW species. Among mid-state counts, Quinnipiac Valley set the pace (76 CD+1 CW species), closely followed by Pawling/Hidden Valley (75 CD+1CW) and Woodbury-Roxbury (75CD+2CW). The Napatree circle, which extends from coastal Rhode Island and Connecticut out to New York waters, recorded 122 CD and 1 CW species, just ahead of New Haven's 121 CD species. A total of 35 species were found this year on each of the 20 of the state's counts. (See the table at the end of this article for these waterfowl, diurnal raptors, columbids, woodpeckers, corvids, thrushes, sparrows, and finches.)

Twenty-five species were found on a single CBC, nearly all of these species being outstanding early winter finds. They were: Muscovy Duck (Bristol); Lincoln's Sparrow (Hartford); Common Redpoll, Common Yellowthroat (Litchfield Hills); Golden Eagle (Lakeville-Sharon); Harlequin Duck CW and Black-headed Gull (Greenwich-Stamford); Eared Grebe, Black-legged Kittiwake, Common Murre, Northern Waterthrush, and Pine Warbler (Napatree); Eastern Phoebe and Palm Warbler (New Haven); King Eider, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Cape May Warbler (New London); Baltimore Oriole CW (Old Lyme-Saybrook); Northern Goshawk and Boat-tailed Grackle (Stratford-Milford); Eurasian Wigeon, Tufted Duck, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron CW, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Black-and-white Warbler CW (Westport).

Each year, the annual Summer Bird Count summary, prepared by Joe Zeranski and Patrick Comins, and with the team now including Tom Robben, lists the ten most abundant species counted on the state's eight June summer censuses. I have not provided such a list in previous annual CBC ar-

ticles, so let's do so this year. The most abundant species on the 2018-19 Connecticut Christmas Bird Count are listed in descending order. Those species with an asterisk were found also on the Summer Bird Count ten most abundant species list. They are: Canada Goose*, European Starling*, American Crow, Red-winged Blackbird*, Mallard, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Dark-eyed Junco, Black-capped Chickadee, and Common Grackle*. Thus, four of these species (*) occurred earlier this year on our SBC ten most abundant species list. The next ten most abundant CBC bird species (11-20) were, in descending order: House Sparrow*, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, White-throated Sparrow, American Robin*, Common Eider, Tufted Titmouse, Common Merganser, Blue Jay, and American Goldfinch. Keep in mind that Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, and American Robin, all flocking birds in early winter, have highly variable numbers from year to year on the Christmas Bird Count.

The most notable bird species recorded this year were Tufted Duck at Westport (seen on the statewide CBC twice in 30 years), Eared Grebe at Napatree (5 times statewide in 30 years), Dovekie at Napatree and also at New London (5 times), Common Murre at Napatree (4 times), Cape May Warbler at New London (3 times), and Black-and-white Warbler at Westport (6 times). Also of note was a count week Yellow-crowned Night-Heron at Westport (7 times statewide in 30 years). Most significantly, a Northern Waterthrush found at Napatree was new to the statewide 30-year list. The last records of Northern Waterthrush on a Connecticut CBC were one sighted in New Haven in 1985-86 and one located at Stratford-Milford in 1984-85 when David Sibley quietly entered into a dense thicket, his field partners standing back respectfully and waiting for the results.

The Connecticut 30-year statewide list now consists of 364 count day and 5 count week species (Pink-footed Goose, Gyrfalcon, Purple Gallinule, Piping Plover, and Western Kingbird). Nine species were reported this year at 30-year high totals, their new high counts and previous high counts shown in parentheses (new 30-year high count/previous

high count). They are: Common Eider (4,977/2,613), Black Scoter (998/222), Common Goldeneye (2,140/2,078), Red-necked Grebe (21/12), Bald Eagle (195/181), Peregrine Falcon (44/37), Black-legged Kittiwake (9/4), Dovekie (2/2), and Razorbill (1,832/67). The open waters of the Atlantic Ocean off Napatree and the eastern Long Island Sound waters of New London account for the record-breaking numbers of six of these species, as follows: Common Eider (4,362 at Napatree, 583 at New London); Black Scoter (881 at Napatree, 94 at New London); Red-necked Grebe (14 at Napatree, 6 at New London); Dovekie (1 each at Napatree and New London); Razorbill (1,723 at Napatree, 106 at New London); Black-legged Kittiwake (9 at Napatree). Old Lyme-Saybrook recorded a record high 931 Common Goldeneye. Bald Eagles continue to increase in numbers in all three regions of the state, with 45 counted on northern CBCs, 62 on mid-state CBCs, and 88 on coastal CBCs. Thirty-one Peregrine Falcons counted along the coast were buoyed by an additional 10 on northern counts and 3 mid-state.

Offsetting the nine new 30-year high counts were eleven new 30-year low-counts. Several of these species continue declines of early winter populations, but others do not fit any clear trends. They are as follows, with parentheses again showing: (previous 30-year low count/new 30-year low count): American Black Duck (3,306/3,021); Pied-billed Grebe (13/12); Sharp-shinned Hawk (68/62); Virginia Rail (4/3); American Woodcock (3/2); Bonaparte's Gull (11/2); Eastern Screech-Owl (122/93); Downy Woodpecker (1,545/1,469); Eastern Phoebe (2/2); American Pipit (7/4); House Finch (2,397/2,123). Each of these species is discussed further in the checklist order summary.

Weather Conditions.

This year's 20 Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts were spread out over the three-week period from December 15 to January 5. The weather conditions for the first full weekend and the one count held at the tail end of the count period consisted of unseasonable warmth, extensive cloudiness, and



Steve Broker photo

The three Virginia Rails found on the 2018-19 Christmas Bird Counts represented the smallest total ever.

absence of snow, with light to heavy rain. This was one of the warmest CBC periods in Connecticut in many years, with nearly all counts getting underway with low temperatures in the low-mid 30s to the low 40s, and high temperatures peaking from the high 30s all the way up to the low-mid 50s (quite remarkably so). Birders out on Saturday, December 15 and Sunday, December 16 experienced mild temperatures, mostly calm winds but with occasional gusts up to 10-15 mph, partly frozen still water and open to partly open moving water, morning and afternoon clouds (and local fog for several counts), light rain in the morning of the 15th only (New Haven, Storrs, and Woodbury-Roxbury), and light to heavy rain throughout the day on the 16th (8 counts). Ground cover? No snow.

Chris Loscalzo, compiler for the New Haven CBC, stated, "This year we lucked out with the weather. Leading up to count day, the forecast was dismal, predicting rain for most of the day. But, the rain held off until Sunday (for the most part), giving us all a chance to cover our areas in relative comfort and ease. The results of the count were interesting.

For the most part, species were seen in similar numbers as in recent years, with the notable exception of the raptors, which were seen in lower numbers overall. This was most likely due to the overcast conditions and absence of wind. Otherwise, species followed recent trends." Storrs compiler Steve Morytko noted, "The day started with morning fog that made it difficult to find birds during what is generally a high activity period. Overall numbers are on the low side (but higher than last year's totals), and the species count was about average as compared to numbers over the past ten years."

Hartford compiler Jay Kaplan wrote of Sunday conditions, "It wasn't as bad as the forecast predicted. We didn't really have any sleet or freezing rain, high winds never materialized, and it did not rain heavily much of the day. That is not to say it was nice. Temperatures were relatively steady in the high 30s during the daylight hours, and while it was damp throughout, there were long stretches during which it didn't precipitate much, if at all. Temperatures well below freezing prior to the count did not translate into the conditions we found last year. There was no ice on rivers, and in most locations, even still water was partially open. As such, several interesting species of waterfowl were recorded this year [see below]. Snow often concentrates birds into smaller, more predictable areas where food is readily available. Speaking of food, several parties noted it was a poor year for nuts, seeds, and fruits. All the above factors contributed to numerous ten year low counts for a wide variety of species."

Three counts (Barkhamsted, Stratford-Milford, and Napatree) were held on the second weekend of count period (December 22-23), birders continuing to enjoy mild conditions in the field, with cloudy to partly cloudy skies and no precipitation, save for some light morning rain in Barkhamsted. Four counts (Bristol, New London, Old Lyme-Saybrook, and Edwin Way Teale - Trail Wood), were held on the third weekend of count period (December 29-30). On the 29th, temperatures became their most balmy for Bristol and New London (in the 40s and 50s), although powerful winds up to 22-25 mph were felt in each count circle. A sudden chill

set in by Sunday the 30th, causing Old Lyme-Saybrook and Trail Wood birders to bundle up. The temperature drop was sufficient for Old Lyme-Saybrook to report a light dusting of snow in the morning - the only snow reported during the entire CBC effort for this year. The Pawling, NY/Hidden Valley, CT count, held by tradition on New Year's Day, saw a return to warmer weather. Co-compiler Carena Pooth's comprehensive review of the count results included this about the weather conditions. "Last year brought us the kind of cold we used to expect on January 1st, but this year we were back to balmy. Temperatures ranged from 39 to 56 degrees, and there was no snow on the ground. The sky was partly cloudy to partly sunny, and only one person mentioned a brief shower in the morning. The weather had been warm and rainy leading up to count day, so all bodies of water were open and high, and the ground was not frozen. However, it was a windy, unpleasant day for birding and many birds (widely known to be smarter than humans) hunkered down."

The final CBC, held on January 5 at Guilford-Long Island Sound, its count circle extending well out into the Sound, got hit with the least favorable weather of the season. It was a day characterized by heavy rain both throughout morning and afternoon. Compiler Tom Kelly summarized the birding as follows. "Weather conditions were less than ideal. Rainy, raw, and windy conditions held throughout the day. The 5:00 A.M. owl prowl was cancelled. The regular 8:00 A.M. start was not impeded. Rain varying in intensity prevailed, with total precipitation around 0.50 inches. Weather conditions kept birding quiet." While several counts did have challenging conditions requiring endurance and fortitude, the 2018-2019 CTCBC went into the record book with fewer stories of hardship in the field than in many years past.

Checklist Summary of Bird Species Observed.

The following run-through of statewide results for this year's Connecticut Christmas Bird Count follows the taxonomic order used on the Connecticut Ornithological Association's

most recent Field Checklist, *Birds of Connecticut*, printed in March 2019. As noted on the field card, "This list includes the 444 bird species recorded in Connecticut and accepted by the Avian Records Committee of Connecticut (ARCC). The names and sequences of species follow the A.O.S. Checklist of the Birds of North America (7th ed. 1998 and supplements to the 59th, December 19, 2018)." It remains to be seen to what extent this latest taxonomic order is used in future years (and to what extent I need to once again resort my numerous Excel spreadsheets). In keeping with recent CBC review articles, I compare this year's results with those of the previous 29 years, covering the period 1989-90 through 2018-19. Additional information in this summary of count results comes from a review of Connecticut CBC spreadsheets going back to the 1950-51 count year. Count by count results are summarized toward the end of this article.

Waterfowl. Most geese, swans, and ducks continue to increase in early winter numbers throughout the state. Snow Goose is highly variable from year to year, but six seen statewide is our third lowest total in 30 years. Eight count circles reported Greater White-fronted Goose during count day or count week, a very nice total. Since the year 2000, larger rafts of Brant have been found on the coast, with more than 3,000 seen this year. Cackling Goose (formerly "Canada Goose, small forms") received separate species status by the time of the 2005-06 National Audubon Society CBC. Cackling numbers now range from 1 to 13 individuals per year, with three being reported in 2018-19. Canada Goose maintains fairly consistent numbers in the 40,000 range, with the majority occurring either on northern or coastal counts. New Haven and New London used to be the North American epicenter for the exotic Mute Swan. The center apparently is shifting eastward and into Rhode Island coastal waters, while total numbers have gone down steadily for the last 15 years. Wood Duck always is a good CBC find, and its numbers are quite variable from year to year. This year's low number of 27 individuals compares with 234 counted two years earlier. Northern Shoveler is observed in most years, with a high count of 35 in 2016-17. Gadwall were in average numbers this year.

The handsome, rufous-capped Eurasian Wigeon has been located on 29 of the last 30 count years. This year, a single individual was found at Westport. Two American Wigeon at Bristol were the only non-coastal wigeon, and the total count was slightly below its 30-year average. The 10,000+ Mallards were in below average numbers, while 3,000+ American Black Ducks continued their eastern early winter population decline. It was not uncommon for an earlier generation of birders to count more than 10,000 black ducks in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Northern Pintail and American Green-winged Teal are variable from year to year; this year, the latter was well below its 30-year average of 115 individuals.

Long gone are the large rafts of 2,000-3,000 Canvasbacks of the late 1960s to early 1980s. Eight of the ten birds seen this year were at Stratford-Milford. Redhead never occurs in high numbers, although four or five decades ago 20 to 50 were counted in several years. Another *Aythya* species, Ring-necked Duck, was counted at just 60% of its 30-year average total. A Tufted Duck at Westport was one of this year's highlight birds. The only previous Tufted Duck on a Connecticut CBC was found on December 20, 1992 at Greenwich-Stamford. At that time, the Avian Records Committee stated, "a pattern of natural vagrancy seems apparent for this abundant, migratory Eurasian duck" (Sixth ARCC Report). All Greater Scaup were reported from coastal counts, save for 5 at Quinnipiac Valley and 1 count week at Litchfield Hills. Rafts of Greater Scaup numbering in the thousands occurred from the 1950s to the mid-1980s, giving statewide counts ranging from 20,000 to 38,000 individuals. With 185 Lesser Scaup at Guilford-Long Island Sound and 140 at Westport, this diving duck with the purple head glow achieved its second highest total in 61 years. New London produced the only King Eider, the latest of 12 individuals found over the most recent 30 CBC years. Napatree had its inaugural CBC year in 2002-03, and its Atlantic Ocean exposure has increased several coastal and pelagic species dramatically. Most notably among the diving ducks, Common Eider occurs in big numbers at Napatree, with more than 4,000 recorded this year. Common Eider continues to make seasonal inroads into Long



Steve Broker photo

Because of an increase at the eastern end of Long Island Sound, Common Eiders are now at all-time Christmas Bird Count highs.

Island Sound waters, and New London saw an additional 583 eider. The "statewide" count of nearly 5,000 birds blows away the previous high count. Harlequin Duck, another bird that collects in high numbers along the rocky coastline of Rhode Island, has nonetheless been seen on 16 of the last 30 Connecticut CBCs. One was found count week at Greenwich-Stamford.

All three scoter species were well represented this year, with good numbers of Surf Scoter on west and east coasts by the mouth of the Connecticut River, numerous White-winged Scoters at New London (83% of the statewide total), and 1,000 Black Scoters in total (86% at Napatree, 9% at New London). Long-tailed Ducks were abundant at Stratford-Milford and on other counts, and 2 at Barkhamsted were significant occurrences on an inland water body. Nearly all Buffleheads were on coastal counts, with Greenwich-Stamford and New London leading the lists. Common Goldeneye achieved a record high count going back to 1950, with 931 of 2,140 individuals occurring at Old Lyme-Saybrook. This year's total count was 40% higher than the 30-year average of 1,525 birds. Two

Barrow's Goldeneyes at New London and count week individuals at Old Lyme-Saybrook and Westport were noteworthy. The three merganser species were in average to above average numbers. Hooded Merganser has been increasingly abundant for more than a decade. Common Merganser, which varies in numbers from year to year, was near the 30-year average. Red-breasted Merganser did not occur on any inland counts this year. Napatree accounted for 44% of the total. Finally, Ruddy Duck was at 44% of its 30-year average count of 515 individuals. Pawling, New York/Hidden Valley, CT led the way with 77 ruddies. This species achieves very large aggregations on inland lakes beginning in early fall.

Gallinaceous Birds to Rallids. The exotic, introduced Ring-necked Pheasant, a favorite game bird of hunt clubs, peaked in abundance in the 1960s at 150-325 birds annually. Its numbers have fallen steadily over the past sixteen or so years, the majority this year being seen on northern counts. Ruffed Grouse was missed for the second time in 5 years and also just the second time since 1950. Wild Turkey populations began to explode beginning in the late 1980s. This year's count of nearly 2,000 birds is the third highest total since then. No count has reported Northern Bobwhite in each of the last 8 CBC years. Pied-billed Grebe is quite variable from year to year. A mere 12 reported this year make for the lowest total in 56 years. Horned Grebe was found only on coastal counts and in below average numbers. Fourteen Red-necked Grebes at Napatree and 6 at New London contributed to a 30-year high total. Only 6 Eared Grebes have been found since the 1950-51 CBC. One at Napatree ranks among the best finds for this year. The widespread feral Rock Pigeon was disregarded by National Audubon Christmas Bird Count guidelines and went uncounted until the 1973-74 count. Its numbers now vary slightly from year to year. Fewer Mourning Doves were counted this year. Five Clapper Rails at New Haven and one at Stratford-Milford (a holdover from the Silver Sands State Park breeding population) accounted for the statewide total. The elusive Virginia Rail was found at New Haven (1) and Old Lyme-Saybrook (2) for a new 30-year low total. Sora was missed for the 3rd year in a row and the 17th time in the last

20 years. Tough bird to get calling from the marsh. American Coot rounds out the rallid species, with the two dozen counted being the lowest total in 29 years.

Shorebirds to Alcids. Two plover species were represented in the count, Black-bellied Plover and Killdeer. Black-bellied was in short supply, while Killdeer numbers were way down - the second lowest in 69 years. Early winter Killdeer peaked in the 1970s, with exceptionally high counts in 1973-74 (349), 1974-75 (284), and 1975-76 (279). This plover species has been in significant decline at least since the 2000-01 CBC. Sandpipers were in generally short supply. Ruddy Turnstone was the exception, with 97 at Old Lyme-Saybrook (82% of the statewide total). Turnstones are quite variable from year to year. The uncommon to rare Red Knot has not been reported for the last 11 years. Exceptional earlier counts were of 20 knots in 1986-87 and 27 in 1992-93. Sanderling dropped to 30% of last year's count. Dunlin were also less frequently seen, with Stratford-Milford and Old Lyme-Saybrook reporting the most birds. The variable annual numbers of Purple Sandpiper are due in part to the availability of birders who venture out to near-shoreline rocky outcrops. These beauties can range yearly from 30 to 600 individuals, and the 138 counted this year represent a nice total. Both American Woodcock and Wilson's Snipe are having a difficult time of it due largely to habitat loss. Woodcock were counted in 51-year low numbers, while a half-dozen snipe pale in comparison with the 20-30 usually found in the 1970s and 1980s. Several earlier good snipe years produced 50 to 60 snipe. Four Greater Yellowlegs were counted along the coast from Greenwich-Stamford to New Haven.

Alcid species are becoming a more frequent occurrence along the coast, as they are found in numbers in Rhode Island but also are reaching into Long Island Sound. Single Dovekies were found at Napatree and within the New London count circle, while Napatree also reported a Common Murre. Common Murre was first reported on a CBC in 2011-12 at New London. The New London to Orient Point, NY ferry ride can be a pretty good bet for seeing Common Murre in Con-



Steve Broker photo

American Bitterns winter in small numbers in coastal marshes, but they're a challenge to find on the Christmas Bird Count.

necticut waters. And then, there are Razorbills. This large alcid species was seen this year at Stratford-Milford (CW), Guilford-Long Island Sound (2), Old Lyme-Saybrook (1), and New London (106), adding to the huge total of 1,723 at Napatree. Our previous high count was 67 in 2013-14. The times they are a changin'.

Gulls to Cormorants. Nine Black-legged Kittiwakes at Napatree produced one of the highlights of the count. One Bonaparte's Gull at Napatree and one at Greenwich-Stamford resulted in the lowest Bonaparte's total since 1950. Raw counts of this diminutive gull species decade by decade are: 1950s (2,382); 1960s (2,658); 1970s (3,278); 1980s (2,015); 1990s (5,551); 2000s (2,258); the first nine years of the 2010s (182). Black-headed Gull is an annual rarity, with 1 found this year at Greenwich-Stamford. Seventeen Black-headed Gulls have been counted in the last 30 years and a total of 32 since 1950-51. The three common gull species are each at very low or record low totals. The Connecticut early winter population of Ring-billed Gulls took off in the early 1980s, but it's been a process of attrition as landfills have been capped around the

state, especially in recent years. A high count of nearly 24,000 birds was achieved in 1987-88, with as many as 21,000 in 2002-03. Now, we're down to fewer than 10,000 Ring-billed Gulls on our count. Similarly, Herring Gulls have plummeted from more than 50,000 statewide in the 1970s and 80s to fewer than 20,000 every year since the mid-1990s. The coast-loving Great Black-backed Gull first topped 2,000 individuals in 1973-74 and achieved a high count approaching 5,000 birds in 1984-85. Its numbers have dropped to fewer than 2,000 birds in 2003-04 and every year since. Three much less common gull species this year were Iceland Gull (count week at Hartford, with 5 count day and one count week bird along the coast), Lesser Black-backed Gull (1 at Westport), and Glaucous Gull (1 at New Haven, a rarity there, and 1 count week at New London).

Our loons continue to thrive in early winter waters, with Red-throated Loon found all along the coast and Common Loon maintaining higher numbers for the last nine years. Inland reports of Common Loon came from Hartford (1), Storrs (CW), and Salmon River (1). Still, 676 Common Loons represent just 70% of last year's record high count. Northern Gannet is another coastal species in ascendancy, reported this year on five CBCs, with 91 at Napatree. Gannets are a welcome addition to the winter avifauna, although this year's total of 109 is well short of last year's record high of 1,203 (almost all those birds having been counted at Napatree). Double-crested Cormorant was represented well this year, with the one count week at Storrs being the only non-coastal cormorant. Bristol had the only non-coastal Great Cormorant, a species that no longer significantly outnumbers Double-crested Cormorants in Long Island Sound during early winter.

Hérons. While American Bittern is recorded in most CBC years, it remains a challenging bird to find. Old Lyme-Saybrook found 2 "thunder-pumpers", and Napatree found one. Two-thirds to three-quarters of Great Blue Herons gravitate to the coast in early winter, and the species has been doing well here for several decades. The less common Great Egret is

found about 40% of the time, located this year on four coastal counts. Black-crowned Night-Heron was more abundant from the 1950s to the 1970s, and this year's count of 6 individuals is very much on the low side. Westport found a count week Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, reported statewide just 7 times in the last 30 years (four of these being count week reports).

New World Vultures to Owls. Black Vultures made their first appearance on the Connecticut CBC in 1989-90. Back in the '80s, one pretty much had to go to the New Milford Land-fill to see this species. There has been a dramatic year-round increase in this "southern" species in succeeding years, with more than 300 counted this year. Hartford led the way with 54 Black Vultures in 2018-19. This species occurs in non-coastal count circles much more frequently than does Turkey Vulture. New London Turkey Vulture roosts accounted for a high percentage of the statewide total.

Golden Eagle is reported on 50% of CBC years. One was sighted at Lakeville-Sharon this time around. Northern Harrier is variable from year to year and was counted in low numbers this year. While Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers drop, Cooper's Hawk numbers continue to rise. Sharpies were at a 34-year low. Coops have been increasing in numbers for at least 18 years and have outnumbered sharpies in 9 of the last 10 years. Stratford-Milford reported one Northern Goshawk. This large Accipiter's numbers are variable year to year, but the double digit numbers of goshawks of the 1980s and '90s are of the past. The remarkable North American recovery in recent decades of avian higher order consumers including Osprey, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, and Brown Pelican is due both to the banning of toxic organochloride biocides and to an extraordinarily dedicated program of reintroductions. Bald Eagle is one of the big winners, as indicated by a major upswing in its numbers since the mid-1980s. In prior years (1950s through 1970s), one, two, three, or four Bald Eagles were fortunate sightings on Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts. This year's 195 Bald Eagles represent a record high total for the species. Red-shouldered Hawk con-



*Steve Broker photo
Eastern Screech-Owls have become harder to find for Christmas Bird Count participants trying to induce their nocturnal whistles.*

tinues to do well in the state in early winter, while Red-tailed Hawk came in at below average numbers. Hartford tallied 105 Red-tails this year. Rough-legged Hawk was a rare miss.

Among the nocturnal raptors, one finds a mixed story. Eastern Screech-Owl was at a 30-year low with 93 individuals. More than 300 were being counted in six different years during the 1980s. Great Horned Owl also was in low supply. No Snowy Owl reports came in during this CBC year. However, Barred Owl achieved its 2nd highest count at 97, with 15 "Who-Cooks-For-You" birds at Woodbury-Roxbury. This statewide count is the second highest, following the 109 reported in 2017-18. The secretive Long-eared Owl was found on 5 counts this year, including one at Storrs and one at Woodbury-Roxbury. One Short-eared Owl was detected at Napatree, and another count week at Stratford-Milford.

Northern Saw-whet Owl is variable from year to year, perhaps related to human nocturnal birding time. Three saw-whets at Barkhamsted, 5 at Litchfield Hills, and 5 at Greenwich-Stamford were most notable.

Kingfishers to Shrikes. The extensive open water this season did not produce high numbers of Belted Kingfisher - and maybe that's why - insufficient concentration of kingfishers. No Red-headed Woodpeckers were reported this year. Red-bellied Woodpeckers were distributed fairly evenly throughout the state. They continue significant growth in numbers going back to the late 1980s. There was a big falloff (down to 22%) in Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers since last year's record high total of 340 birds. Sapsuckers have a southward post-breeding dispersal, with some 20% found on CBCs occurring on northern counts, 35% on mid-state counts, and 45% on coastal counts. Downy Woodpeckers were low in all three latitudinal regions of the state. Still, this species has fared well over the years. Hairy Woodpeckers (284 statewide) were at their second lowest total in 58 years. They usually number in the 300s and 400s. Northern Flickers also were in short supply. Pileated Woodpecker continues as a relative rarity in southeastern Connecticut, but its early winter statewide population has increased in recent years.

American Kestrels have dropped to very low numbers beginning in the late 1990s, while Merlins have had the opposite trajectory, now outnumbering kestrels in 15 of the last 18 years. Peregrine Falcons again achieved a record high number in 2018-19, reflecting a resurgent statewide breeding population. Peregrines that secure a nesting site defend their territory and tend to be non-migratory through the fall and winter, as is generally the case for the "Eastern" peregrine. All reports of Monk Parakeet occurred at four coastal counts from Greenwich-Stamford east to New Haven. Two Eastern Phoebes at New Haven were the only ones reported. Single Northern Shrikes were found on four northern counts. Major irruption years for Northern Shrike were recorded in 1995-96 (67), 1999-2000 (24), and 2007-08 (16).

Corvids to Kinglets. Blue Jays are highly variable from year to year, yet they dropped to their second lowest number in 40 years. The 24,000 American Crows recorded this year shouldn't mask the fact that they continue to be counted in low numbers. Highest counts from years past range from 60,000 to 80,000 birds. Fish Crows have become more abundant since the mid-1990s, and Common Ravens have soared in numbers since the late 1980s as nesting pairs continue to spread through the state. Horned Larks were in low supply. Black-capped Chickadees have been in reduced numbers for the past 11 years, while Tufted Titmice (second lowest total in 30 years) show no clear trend in early winter populations. The last big irruption year for Red-breasted Nuthatch was in 2012-13. White-breasted Nuthatches fell to 80% of the 30-year average count. Brown Creepers also were hard to find. House Wren is reported in most years. Two House Wrens were at Westport, and one was at New Haven. Winter Wrens were well represented, especially along the coast. Marsh Wren (13 total) continued on territory at their New Haven, Old Lyme-Saybrook, and Napatree strongholds. In 2015-16, Carolina Wrens fell to 37% of their previous year's total. As has been the case in preceding winters characterized by especially heavy or extensive snow cover, it takes a number of years for Carolina Wrens to bounce back from their diminished overwintering and breeding populations. Now four years after the hard winter of 2014-15, they are approaching yet another peak in numbers. Both kinglet species approached record low numbers this year, Golden-crowned falling to 25% of last year's count.

Thrushes to Waxwings. Recovery of Eastern Bluebird populations began in the mid- to late 1980s with the placing of hundreds of bluebird nest boxes in appropriate habitat. Christmas Bird Count data suggest that this species exhibits a cycle of higher followed by lower numbers. This was a CBC year of lower bluebird numbers. Hermit Thrush is similarly variable in annual numbers, this year seeing a 40% downturn from last. Flocking birds, including robins, waxwings, blackbirds, and grackles, are the most variable in their Connecticut early winter populations. American Robins range wildly

from years in which 1,500 individuals are counted to years following in which their numbers swell to 40,000 individuals. This was not a big year for robins. Gray Catbirds were counted at highest numbers in 11 years, with most occurring on coastal counts. Only 7 Brown Thrashers were found this year, 3 at Napatree and 4 at New London. Their peak numbers occurred in the 1960s and 70s. It was not unusual to record 1,500 to 2,000 Northern Mockingbirds in the 1980s and '90s. This year, they were at second lowest total with just 450 individuals. As noted above and in previous CBC review articles, European Starling early winter populations have fallen dramatically since the new millennium. Compare this year's 35,000 starlings with the 370,000 recorded in 1962-63. All things considered, this is not a bad development. House Sparrow, another widespread introduced species, follows a similar trend, with a 25% drop from 2017-18 numbers. American Pipit was at a 30-year low, with one count week occurrence on a northern count and 4 individuals on the coast. Cedar Waxwings also were in diminished numbers, and as noted this is another flocking species showing high variability from year to year.

Winter Finches to Sparrows. A total of four Evening Grosbeaks were found in Barkhamsted, Litchfield Hills, and Woodbury-Roxbury count circles. Evening Grosbeaks underwent an extensive change in wintering grounds in the mid-1990s and have become more a sought out target bird than one expected to be around. House Finch has dropped significantly in numbers over the last 24 years, with high mortality usually attributed to mycoplasmal conjunctivitis, a debilitating eye infection caused by "a poultry pathogen with a worldwide distribution" (Birds of North America). In contrast, Purple Finch (in major decline as a breeding species in nearby Massachusetts), enjoyed its highest numbers in 11 years. This was yet another non-irruption year for winter finches. A single Common Redpoll was found at Litchfield Hills. The most recent irruptions occurred in 2012-13 (474 redpolls) and 2007-08 (804 redpolls). No reports came in for the two crossbill species. Pine Siskins range greatly in numbers during their flight years, and this year's highest numbers



Bruce Finnan photo

Field Sparrows have been in long-term decline on the state's Christmas Bird Counts, along with other birds relying on diminished scrub land habitat.

occurred at Barkhamsted and Greenwich-Stamford. American Goldfinch also varies in numbers year to year, dropping 20% from 2017-18 totals. Lapland Longspur is found fairly infrequently on Connecticut CBCs, and this year Storrs had 2 and Napatree had 1. Six Snow Buntings were found on the northern count at Storrs, while the great majority were found on coastal counts. Fifty Eastern Towhees, also mostly on coastal counts, were a fairly representative total.

Scrubland sparrows continue to drop in numbers, with American Tree Sparrow numbers effectively crashing over the past 50-60 years. During the 1960s and 1970s, 4,000 to 6,000+ Tree Sparrows were found annually. Two out of the last four years, their numbers have been below 1,000 individuals, including the 941 seen this year. Field Sparrows also have experienced major decline in numbers over the past 9-14 years. Their peak early winter populations occurred from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s at 600-1,200 birds. This year's 143 Field Sparrows exceeds last year's total of 96, but the trend downward is real. Fifteen lingering Chipping Sparrows were representative of most years. Five Vesper Sparrows made

for a nice total, with 1 at Storrs, 1 at Napatree, and 3 at New London. Hartford grasslands produced 32 Savannah Sparrows, while most Savannahs were found along the coast. They including 5 "Ipswich" sparrows. Nearly all the 100 or so Fox Sparrows were on coastal counts, while Song Sparrows were well represented in all regions of the state. The only Lincoln's Sparrow was seen at Hartford. Swamp Sparrows were in good supply along the coast and inland, but this was a poor CBC year for wintering White-throated Sparrows. Hartford had a high number of White-crowned Sparrows, many coming from Glastonbury Meadows. It was an off year for Dark-eyed Junco, another usually abundant wintering sparrow species.

Chats to Cardueline Finches. Napatree enjoyed an unusually high count of Yellow-breasted Chats with 7 located. Eastern Meadowlark is another grassland species that has declined significantly in past years. Of the two dozen reported this year, half were from Salmon River. As many as 200-350 meadowlarks were reported on Connecticut CBCs from the 1950s through the 1970s. The only Baltimore Oriole report was of a count week bird at Old Lyme-Saybrook. Red-winged Blackbirds, Brown-headed Cowbirds, Rusty Blackbirds, and Common Grackles all vary significantly from year to year. More than 10,000 Red-winged Blackbirds made for a good year's total this year. In contrast, Brown-headed Cowbirds were down 44% from a year ago, Rusty Blackbirds were down 84% with just 55 individuals, and 20,000 fewer Common Grackles were counted than those observed in 2017-18. All 28 Boat-tailed Grackles were from the Stratford-Milford CBC.

It was a pretty good year for wood warblers, with 8 species reported. Warbler species found this year that are reported infrequently included a Northern Waterthrush at Napatree, a Black-and-white Warbler at Westport, an Orange-crowned Warbler at New London, a Common Yellowthroat at Litchfield Hills, and a Cape May Warbler at New London. The more frequently occurring Palm and Pine warblers were at New Haven (4 Palm) and Napatree (1 Pine). Yellow-rumped

Warbler is the most commonly occurring parulid in early winter, and its numbers vary from year to year. Yellow-rumps are getting more difficult to find in recent years. Consider last year's number (611) versus this year's (137). Low, double digit numbers of Yellow-rumped Warbler seldom occurred through the 1970s, '80's, and '90s. Northern Cardinals maintain fairly steady numbers statewide in the 3,000 range, but there were fewer around this year. Another high point in the current Christmas Bird Count season was discovery of a Painted Bunting count week at Greenwich-Stamford. Painted Bunting has occurred just three times previously on Christmas Counts, a brightly plumaged male count week at an Old Lyme feeder in back-to-back years of 1989-90 and 1990-91, and a count day female in 2006-07 in New Haven. It should be noted that the first verified state record of Painted Bunting was published in *The Connecticut Warbler* in 1983 (Volume 3, Number 2).

Early Winter Population Trends.

Most waterfowl species are faring well. Brant are expanding in numbers along the shoreline, while introduced Mute Swan populations have been coming back to Earth and apparently are shifting their range eastward. Concern exists about the species' impacts on native waterfowl and the wetland habitats on which they are dependent. American Black Ducks continue to be in decline. Large coastal rafts of Canvasbacks and Greater Scaup haven't been seen in many years. To what extent have Canvasbacks altered their migration routes along the east Coast? Prior study of the food habits of Greater Scaup in Long Island Sound have indicated major changes in their plant and animal diets. Does this continue to contribute to their diminished numbers? Common Eider is finding Long Island Sound waters more favorable for early winter foraging. Uncommon and rare diving ducks continue to make appearances on the Sound (Tufted Duck, King Eider, Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye).

Ring-necked Pheasant relies on restocking efforts. Habitat loss from changes in land use (farming/agriculture, develop-

ment) has not benefited this species. Ruffed Grouse is very much dependent on appropriate habitat restoration state-wide. Wild Turkey is a wildly successful reintroduction to Connecticut. Northern Bobwhite requires regular controlled burns to maintain early successional habitat. King Rail, Clapper Rail, Virginia Rail, and Sora require playback efforts in order to be detected in coastal and inland marshes. Plovers and Sandpipers need close monitoring through CBC, SBC, atlasing, and other surveys. American Woodcock and Wilson's Snipe are best located by field observers who have long-time familiarity with their preferred habitats. Alcids have become a welcome and more common occurrence in our coastal waters.

Bonaparte's Gull requires further study to understand its recently sinking numbers in our region. The three common gull species (Ring-billed, Herring, Great Black-backed) have experienced changing fortunes largely as the result of human activities (from hunting in days of the millinery trade to opening then closing landfills among the causes). Further research is needed on many aspects of their life histories. Wintering loon populations are robust in our region. Northern Gannet is a welcome addition to our annual avifauna.

Protection and restoration of wetlands is essential for maintenance of American Bittern populations. Great Blue Heron rookeries have expanded through the state but can undergo abandonment with a growing Bald Eagle population. Uncommon and rare herons and relatives make very infrequent appearances on Connecticut Christmas Bird Counts.

The two New World vulture species have increased dramatically in numbers on the CT CBC, with wintering Black Vultures beginning to outnumber Turkey Vultures. Significant changes are underway with relative numbers of the three *Accipiter* species. Cooper's Hawks have been outnumbering Sharp-shinned Hawks for a decade. Bald Eagles have required more than half a century to recover from previous organochloride contamination. Red-shouldered Hawks appear to be thriving. Reduced numbers of several owl species

are reflected in the data currently assembling for the new Connecticut Bird Atlas.

Most woodpecker species have fared very well in this heavily forested state, but what can be expected from further forest fragmentation? Red-bellied Woodpecker is an expanding wood products industry in southern New England. Will Pileated Woodpecker expand its range further into southeastern Connecticut? Conservation measures for American Kestrel continue to be essential to boosting up both breeding and wintering populations. The larger falcons, Merlins and Peregrines, are riding high, with Peregrines far exceeding historical nesting and wintering birds and Merlins expected to nest in the state before long. The Monk Parakeet population trajectory is complicated by control measures and stochastic factors. With Loggerhead Shrikes gone from our state avifauna, what impact will climate change have on wintering Northern Shrikes?

Our two crow species have experienced changing fortunes, with evidence of American Crow die back from West Nile Virus, while Fish Crow apparently has been expanding along the coast and up river valleys. Common Raven dazzles with its range expansion through the state, not to mention its endlessly fascinating behavioral traits. How well will the more common small songbirds, such as chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and creepers, do in upcoming years? Will global warming make life easier for semi-hardy Carolina Wrens? Eastern Bluebird has benefited from extensive conservation efforts. The CBC appearance of such thrush species as Townsend's Solitaire, Veery, Swainson's Thrush, and Wood Thrush is very infrequent but always a treat. Brown Thrasher is losing appropriate understory and edge habitat with forest maturation. Ongoing northward range expansion discussed in the literature for Northern Mockingbirds is not supported by Connecticut CBC data. European Starlings have been in decline for several decades.

House Finch numbers have been affected by debilitating eye infection. Purple Finch gives evidence of declining breeding

and wintering populations, which may be due to loss of appropriate habitat or to naturally fluctuating irruptive winter patterns. Irruptions of winter finches in Connecticut may continue to lessen with anticipated climate change. Grassland and open meadow sparrows are in decline. Seasonal changes in the occurrence of our various sparrow species are among the joys of participating in a Christmas Bird Count.

As with grassland sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks are losing their presence in Connecticut. Highly variable annual appearances of flocking blackbirds and grackles contribute to the diverse experiences of bird counts, where every year is different from the previous. Boat-tailed Grackle continues to delight Connecticut birders, as this species of historically far southern distribution has extended its breeding and wintering range into southern New England and remains in breeding colonies of limited coastal distribution in the state. Parulid warblers often contribute to the excitement of a Christmas Bird Count, as we now have 25 different species of warblers that have occurred on statewide counts. Some of them (Prothonotary, Tennessee, MacGillivray's, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Yellow, Prairie) have occurred only once. Flashy neotropical migrants such as Painted Bunting occasional occur on our CBC, further enhancing the experience of being out in the field during a season of diminished daylight and potentially chilling cold.

Statewide Christmas Bird Counts (7 Northern, 5 Mid-State, 8 Coastal = 20 total).

270,998 total individuals (30-year low total), 168 count day species +3 count week species (Harlequin Duck, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Baltimore Oriole)

748 field observers + 78 feeder watchers = 826 total observers

2020.83 total party hours + 8848.16 total party miles

30-year high counts (9): Common Eider (4,977/2,613), Black Scoter (998/222), Common Goldeneye (2,140/2,078), Red-necked Grebe (21/12), Bald Eagle (195/181), Peregrine Falcon

(44/37), Black-legged Kittiwake (9/4), Dovekie (2/2), Razor-bill (1,832/67)

30-year low counts (11): American Black Duck (3,306/3,021), Pied-billed Grebe (13/12), Sharp-shinned Hawk (68/62), Virginia Rail (4/3), American Woodcock (3/2), Bonaparte's Gull (11/2), Eastern Screech-Owl (122/93), Downy Woodpecker (1,545/1,469), Eastern Phoebe (2/2), American Pipit (7/4), House Finch (2,397/2,123)

New species (1): Northern Waterthrush

Rarities (6): Tufted Duck (2X), Eared Grebe (5X), Dovekie (5X), Common Murre (4X), Cape May Warbler (3X), Black-and-white Warbler (6X)

Other Noteworthy species (1): Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (7X)

30-year statewide total = 264 count day + 5 count week species (Pink-footed Goose, Gyrfalcon, Purple Gallinule, Piping Plover, Western Kingbird)

Northern Christmas Bird Counts (7)

88,343 total individuals, 108 count day species + 5 count week species (American Green-winged Teal, Greater Scaup, Double-crested Cormorant, Iceland Gull, American Pipit

241 field observers + 43 feeder watchers = 274 total observers

690.50 total party hours & 3,545.70 total party miles

30-year high counts (4): Long-tailed Duck (2/2), Black Vulture (123/106), Peregrine Falcon (100/8), Swamp Sparrow (59/58)

30-year low counts (6): American Green-winged Teal (1/CW, missed count day first time in 30 years), American Coot (1/0, missed first time in 30 years), Great Black-backed Gull (23/20), Downy Woodpecker (580/514), Dark-eyed Junco (3,328/3,323), Brown-headed Cowbird (171/67)

New species (0)

Rarities (1): Vesper Sparrow

30-year northern total = 175 count day species + 1 count week species (Black-and-white Warbler)

Barkhamsted, CT CBC (December 22, 2018)

Compiler: David Tripp, Jr. (Litchfield Hills Audubon Society)

6,814 total individuals (30-year low), 64 count day species + 0 count week species

36 field observers + 5 feeder watchers = 41 total observers

81.00 total party hours & 614.50 total party miles

30-year high counts (2): Great Blue Heron (3/3), Peregrine Falcon (2/2)

30-year low counts (10): Ring-billed Gull (43/42), Mourning Dove (182/135), Downy Woodpecker (60/55), Blue Jay (85/52), American Crow (288/259), Brown Creeper (4/3), Golden-crowned Kinglet (9/7), Northern Mockingbird (8/4), American Tree Sparrow (17/2), Dark-eyed Junco (288/278)

New species (2): Long-tailed Duck (new to CD, was CW), Black Vulture

Rarities (2): Snow Goose (4X), Peregrine Falcon (3X)

30-year total = 127 count day species + 0 count week species

Bristol, CT CBC (December 29, 2018)

Compiler: Jack Swatt

7,326 total individuals, 70 count day species + 2 count week species (Merlin, Rusty Blackbird)

36 field observers + 5 feeder watchers = 41 total observers

98.25 total party hours & 535.25 total party miles

New species (11 count day + 1 count week): Greater White-fronted Goose, Cackling Goose, Mute Swan, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Great Cormorant, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Northern Shrike, Field Sparrow (new to count day, was count week), Rusty Blackbird CW, Pine Siskin

Rarities (3): Greater White-fronted Goose, Great Cormorant, Northern Shrike

3-year total = 84 count day species and 3 count week species (Great Black-backed Gull, Eastern Towhee, Rusty Blackbird)

Edwin Way Teale, Trail Wood CBC (December 30, 2018)

Compiler: Sue Harrington (Natchaug Ornithological Society)

3,122 total individuals (30-year low), 57 count day species + 0 count week species

57 field observers + 0 feeder watchers = 57 total observers

35.00 total party hours & 194.00 total party miles

30-year high counts (1): Wild Turkey (150/128)

30-year low counts (3): Mourning Dove (63/35), Blue Jay (54/35), Brown-headed Cowbird (1/1)

New species (0)

Rarities (1): Killdeer (5X)

30-year total = 121 count day species + 0 count week species

Hartford CBC (December 16, 2018)

Compilers: Jay Kaplan & Steve Davis (Hartford Audubon Society)

39,414 total individuals, 84 count day species + 3 count week species (Green-winged Teal - American, Iceland Gull, American Pipit)

76 field observers + 8 feeder watchers = 84 total observers

206.00 total party hours & 599.50 total party miles

30-year high counts (1): Swamp Sparrow (36/27)

30-year low counts (6): Great Black-backed Gull (22/19), Downy Woodpecker (137/119), Tufted Titmouse (228/200), Golden-crowned Kinglet (8/4), Brown-headed Cowbird (5/2), House Finch (166/118)

New species (0)

Rarities (3): Bufflehead (4X), Common Loon (3X) Lincoln's Sparrow (6X)

30-year total = 147 count day species + 7 count week species (Tundra Swan, White-winged Scoter, Osprey, Virginia Rail, Snowy Owl, Black-and-white Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat)

Litchfield Hills CBC (December 16, 2018)

Compiler: Raymond E. Belding (Litchfield Hills Audubon Society)

10,663 total individuals, 82 count day species + 3 count week species (Green-winged Teal - American, Greater Scaup, Merlin)

44 field observers + 9 feeder watchers = 53 total observers

140 total party hours & 863.50 total party miles

30-year high counts (2): Black Vulture (15/10), White-crowned Sparrow (2/1)

30-year low counts (5): Sharp-shinned Hawk (1/1), Blue Jay (238/113), Brown Creeper (4/2), Northern Mockingbird (2/1), American Goldfinch (123/117)

New species (1): Peregrine Falcon (new to CD, was CW)

Rarities (2): Common Yellowthroat (6X), Chipping Sparrow (6X)

30-year total = 144 count day species + 2 count week species (Blue-winged Teal, Glaucous Gull)

Lakeville-Sharon CBC (December 30, 2018)

Compiler: Zachary Adams (Housatonic Audubon Society)

12,135 total individuals, 74 count day species + 0 count week species

22 field observers + 1 feeder watcher = 23 total observers

50.25 total party hours & 382.45 total party miles

30-year high counts (3): Turkey Vulture (5/1), Sharp-shinned Hawk (7/6), Red-shouldered Hawk (2/2)

30-year low counts (0)

New species (0)

Rarities (5): Turkey Vulture (4X), Golden Eagle (6X), Peregrine Falcon (5X), Field Sparrow (3X), Eastern Towhee (4X)

Other noteworthy species (2): Red-shouldered Hawk (6X), Winter Wren (6X)

30-year total = 129 count day species + 0 count week species

Storrs CBC (December 15, 2018)

Compiler: Steve Morytko (Natchaug Ornithological Society)

8,867 total individuals, 76 count day species + 4 count week species (Common Loon, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Black-backed Gull, Field Sparrow)

22 field observers + 4 feeder watchers = 26 total observers

80 total party hours & 356.50 total party miles

30-year high counts (7): Common Merganser (139/122), Wild Turkey (209/182), Great Blue Heron (7/7), Pileated Woodpecker (13/11), Lapland Longspur (2/1), Yellow-rumped

Warbler (5/3), Eastern Meadowlark (4/3)

30-year low counts (1): American Tree Sparrow (32/26)

New species (0)

Rarities (6): Common Loon CW (5X), Double-crested Cormorant (3X), Long-eared Owl (5X), Lapland Longspur (4X), Yellow-rumped Warbler (5X), Vesper Sparrow (2X)

Other noteworthy species (1): Northern Shrike (6X)

30-year total = 130 count day species + 1 count week species (Short-eared Owl)

Mid-State Christmas Bird Counts (5)

41,310 total individuals (30-year low total), 94 count day species (30-year low total) + 2 count week species (Cackling Goose, Long-eared Owl)

144 field observers + 30 feeder watchers = 174 total observers

411.93 total party hours & 2,064.38 total party miles

30-year high counts (0)

30-year low counts (19): Northern Harrier (2/2), Sharp-shinned Hawk (8/8), Eastern Screech-Owl (41/26), Northern Saw-whet Owl (2/1), Downy Woodpecker (404/399), Hairy Woodpecker (74/70), Blue Jay (968/737), American Crow (2,088/1,473), Black-capped Chickadee (1,611/1,568), Tufted Titmouse (1,049/1,018), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (2/1), Northern Mockingbird (68/55), Yellow-rumped Warbler (6/3), White-crowned Sparrow (1/1), Savannah Sparrow (5/5), Eastern Towhee (1/0, missed first time in 30 years), Northern Cardinal (778/680), House Finch (578/337), House Sparrow (934/708)

New species (0)

Rarities (0)

30-year mid-state total = 172 count day species + 1 count

week species (Rufous Hummingbird)

Oxford CBC (December 16, 2018)

Compiler: Roy Harvey

4,962 total individuals, 60 count day species + 0 count week species

17 field observers + 0 feeder watchers = 17 total observers

51.60 total party hours & 303.30 total party miles

30-year high counts (2): Bald Eagle (9/7), Merlin (2/2)

30-year low counts (7): Herring Gull (18/12), Great Black-backed Gull (1/1), Northern Flicker (5/3), American Crow (252/168), Northern Mockingbird (9/7), American Tree Sparrow (8/4), House Sparrow (109/61)

New species (0)

Rarities (0)

Other noteworthy species (1): Pied-billed Grebe (6X)

30-year total = 136 count day species + 0 count week species

Pawling/Hidden Valley CBC (January 1, 2019)

Compilers: Carena Pooth & Angela Dimmitt (Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club)

10,937 total individuals, 75 count day species + 1 count week species (Cedar Waxwing)

39 field observers + 6 feeder watchers = 45 total observers

117.00 total party hours & 539.25 total party miles

30-year high counts (2): Green-winged Teal - American (2/2), Red-shouldered Hawk (16/16)

30-year low counts (4): White-breasted Nuthatch (115/114), Northern Mockingbird (19/12), Cedar Waxwing (13/CW,

missed first time on CD), House Finch (112/110)

New species (0)

Rarities (3): Green-winged Teal - American (4X), American Woodcock (2X), Peregrine Falcon (3X)

30-year total = 133 count day species + 3 count week species (Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Pine Grosbeak)

Quinnipiac Valley CBC (December 16, 2018)

Compilers: Melissa Baston & Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe (Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society)

8,154 total individuals (30-year low), 76 count day species + 1 count week species (Sharp-shinned Hawk)

28 field observers + 5 feeder watchers = 33 total observers

74.83 total party hours & 421.58 total party miles

30-year high counts (3): Greater Scaup (5/2), Black Vulture (12/8), Peregrine Falcon (2/2)

30-year low counts (4): Cooper's Hawk (1/1), European Starling (1,256/915), House Finch (42/37), House Sparrow (139/120)

New species (0)

Rarities (1): Greater Scaup (3X)

30-year total = 146 count day species + 3 count week species (Rough-legged Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Snowy Owl)

Salmon River CBC (December 16, 2018)

Compilers: Sharon Dellinger & Doreen Jezek (Mattabesek Audubon Society)

4,542 total individuals, 67 count day species + 1 count week species (Green-winged Teal - American)

33 field observers + 15 feeder watchers = 48 total observers

64.50 total party hours & 299.25 total party miles

30-year high counts (2): Cooper's Hawk (6/6), Brown-headed Cowbird (503/132)

30-year low counts (5): Rock Pigeon (29/21), Blue Jay (159/54), American Crow (190/100), Northern Mockingbird (5/2), Northern Cardinal (105/96)

New species (0)

Rarities (1): Green-winged Teal - American (6X)

30-year total = 136 count day species + 2 count week species (Long-tailed Duck, White-winged Scoter)

Woodbury-Roxbury CBC (December 15, 2018)

Compiler: Ken Elkins (Western Connecticut Bird Club)

12,473 total individuals, 75 count day species + 2 count week species (Cackling Goose, Long-eared Owl)

26 field observers + 4 feeder watchers = 30 total observers

104.00 total party hours & 501.00 total party miles

30-year high counts (4): Hooded Merganser (78/67), Pileated Woodpecker (23/23), Common Raven (23/23), Swamp Sparrow (25/22)

30-year low counts (8): Mallard (245/222), Great Black-backed Gull (5/0, missed first time), Carolina Wren (12/0, missed first time), Golden-crowned Kinglet (10/9), Eastern Bluebird (148/141), Yellow-rumped Warbler (2/0, missed first time), Dark-eyed Junco (950/565), Northern Cardinal (197/194)

New species (0)

Rarities (1): Cackling Goose CW (6X)

Other noteworthy species (1): Evening Grosbeak (8X, first count day report in 15 years)

30-year total = 145 count day species + 3 count week species ((*Selasphorus* hummingbird, Wilson's Warbler, Western Tanager)

Coastal Christmas Bird Counts (8)

141,343 total individuals, 160 count day species + 3 count week species (Harlequin Duck, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Baltimore Oriole)

363 field observers + 15 feeder watchers = 378 total observers

918.40 total party hours & 3,238.08 total party miles

30-year high counts (11): Common Eider (4,977/2,678), Barrow's Goldeneye (2/2), Red-necked Grebe (21/12), Bald Eagle (88/81), Peregrine Falcon (31/28), Black-legged Kittiwake (9/8), Dovekie (2/2), Razorbill (1,832/174), Barred Owl (46/27), White-crowned Sparrow (21/20), Purple Finch (107/94)

30-year low counts (12): Snow Goose (1/0, missed first time in 30-years), American Black Duck (2,676/2,469), Pied-billed Grebe (11/10), American Kestrel (2/2), Virginia Rail (4/3), Killdeer (6/3), American Woodcock (3/1), Bonaparte's Gull (10/2), Eastern Screech-Owl (40/23), Tufted Titmouse (1,349/1,274), American Tree Sparrow (228/192), House Finch (1,143/1,117)

New species (1): Northern Waterthrush

Rarities (6): Tufted Duck (2X), Eared Grebe (6X), Yellow-crowned Night-Heron count week (5X), Common Murre (4X), Black-and-white Warbler (4X), Cape May Warbler (3X)

Other Noteworthy species (1): Dovekie (7X)

30-year coastal total = 256 count day species + 7 count week species (Pink-footed Goose, Gyrfalcon, Purple Gallinule, Piping Plover, Boreal Chickadee, Veery, Baltimore Oriole)

Greenwich-Stamford CBC (December 16, 2018)

Compiler: Cynthia Ehlinger (Audubon Greenwich)

18,025 total individuals, 105 count day species + 8 count week species (Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Harlequin Duck, Surf Scoter, Turkey Vulture, Pileated Woodpecker, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Painted Bunting)

56 field observers + 6 feeder watchers = 62 total observers

190.50 total party hours & 730.68 total party miles

30-year high counts (3): Black Scoter (5/4), Northern Saw-whet Owl (5/4), White-crowned Sparrow (3/3)

30-year low counts (18): American Black Duck (327/270), Turkey Vulture (2/CW, missed CD first time), Killdeer (1/1), Ring-billed Gull (717/566), Great Black-backed Gull (41/27), Eastern Screech-Owl (3/1), Downy Woodpecker (127/69), Hairy Woodpecker (28/24), Pileated Woodpecker (2/CW, missed CD first time), American Crow (221/138), Tufted Titmouse (294/243), White-breasted Nuthatch (111/97), Gray Catbird (3/2), Northern Mockingbird (37/30), Cedar Waxwing (46/29), American Tree Sparrow (7/2), Red-winged Blackbird (1/1), House Finch (107/88)

New species (2): Common Eider, Painted Bunting CW

Rarities (3): Greater White-fronted Goose CW (5X), Northern Shoveler (6X), Black-headed Gull (6X)

30-year total = 191 count day species + 9 count week species (Pink-footed Goose, Ross's Goose, Harlequin Duck, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Purple Gallinule, Sanderling, Glaucous Gull, Lincoln's Sparrow, Painted Bunting)

Guilford-Long Island Sound CBC (January 5, 2019)

Compilers: Tom Kelly & Louise Kelly (Menunkatuck Audubon Society)

2,157 total individuals (4-year low), 57 count day species (4-

year low) + 0 count week species

25 field observers + 1 feeder watcher = 26 total observers

32.00 total party hours & 99.00 total party miles

New species (6): American Wigeon, Canvasback, Common Eider, Common Merganser, Great Cormorant, Razorbill

4-year total = 105 count day species + 1 count week species (Black Vulture)

Napatree CBC (December 23, 2018)

Compilers: Shaibal Mitra & Glenn Williams

326,993 total individuals, 122 count day species + 1 count week species

40 field observers + 0 feeder watchers = 40 total observers

126.40 total party hours & 285.30 total party miles

18-year high counts (11): Common Eider (4,362/2,465), Black Scoter (861/674), Red-necked Grebe (14/10), Black Vulture (39/29), Red-shouldered Hawk (14/12), Razorbill (1,723/156), Barred Owl (9/5), Fish Crow (13/6), Black-capped Chickadee (701/611), Winter Wren (12/11), Yellow-breasted Chat (7/4)

18-year low counts (5): American Black Duck (181/160), Merlin (1/1), Bonaparte's Gull (4/1), Northern Saw-whet Owl (2/2), American Tree Sparrow (36/30)

New species (2): Common Murre, Northern Waterthrush

Rarities (4): Greater White-fronted Goose (3X), Eared Grebe (2X), Vesper Sparrow (3X), Pine Siskin (3X)

Other Noteworthy Species (1): Lapland Longspur (4X)

40 total field observers = 18-year high total

40 total observers = 18-year high total

18-year total = 189 count day species + 1 count week species (Pink-footed Goose)

New Haven CBC (December 15, 2018)

Compiler: Chris Loscalzo (New Haven Bird Club)

26,331 total individuals, 121 count day species + 0 count week species

79 field observers + 4 feeder watchers = 83 total observers

178.00 total party hours & 654.00 total party miles

30-year high counts (5): Common Eider (5/1), Peregrine Falcon (11/5), Barred Owl (8/7), Common Raven (22/20), Carolina Wren (177/141)

30-year low counts (4): Mute Swan (57/50), Northern Harrier (3/1), Sharp-shinned Hawk (5/5), Killdeer (1/1)

New species (0)

Rarities (2): Common Eider (4X), Glaucous Gull (3X)

Other noteworthy species (2): Greater White-fronted Goose (6X), House Wren (8X)

30-year total = 196 count day species + 7 count week species (Black-legged Kittiwake, Boreal Chickadee, Veery, American Redstart, Wilson's Warbler, Seaside Sparrow, Bullock's Oriole)

New London CBC (December 29, 2018)

Compiler: Robert Dewire

33,975 total individuals, 119 count day species + 2 count week species (Redhead, Glaucous Gull)

57 field observers + 3 feeder watchers = 60 total observers

143.00 total party hours & 483.00 total party miles

30-year high counts (7): White-winged Scoter (555/34), Black

Scoter (94/36), Barrow's Goldeneye (2/1), Bald Eagle (21/13),
Razorbill (106/30), Barred Owl (13/6), Purple Finch (19/12)

30-year low counts (5): Mallard (745/578), Northern Harrier
(2/1), Herring Gull (1,628/1,302), Northern Flicker (33/24),
American Tree Sparrow (28/13)

New species (2): Cape May Warbler, Vesper Sparrow

Rarities (5): King Eider (5X), Barrow's Goldeneye (3X), Glau-
cous Gull (4X), Dovekie (2X), Orange-crowned Warbler (4X)

30-year total = 189 count day species + 3 count week species
(Osprey, Western Kingbird, Black-and-white Warbler)

Old Lyme-Saybrook CBC (December 30, 2018)

Compiler: Barbara Hawes (Potapaug Audubon Society)

10,889 total individuals, 112 count day species + 2 count
week species (Barrow's Goldeneye, Baltimore Oriole)

39 field observers + 0 feeder watchers = 39 total observers

88.50 total party miles & 290.00 total party miles

30-year high counts (2): Surf Scoter (189/153), Common
Goldeneye (931/285)

30-year low counts (1): American Tree Sparrow (29/20)

New species (0)

Rarities (3): Barrow's Goldeneye CW (6X), Razorbill (3X),
Baltimore Oriole CW (3X)

30-year total = 192 count day species + 4 count week species
(Gyr Falcon, Sandhill Crane, Piping Plover, Painted Bunting)

Stratford-Milford CBC (December 22, 2018)

Compiler: Steve Mayo

18,336 total individuals, 113 count day species + 5 count
week species (Greater White-fronted Goose, Northern Gan-

net, Iceland Gull, Razorbill, Short-eared Owl)

35 field observers + 1 feeder watcher = 36 total observers

95.00 total party hours & 391.00 total party miles

30-year high counts (14): Brant (824/537), Redhead (3/1),
Common Eider (13/1), Black Scoter (4/3), Long-tailed Duck
(519/371), Black Vulture (11/4), Turkey Vulture (25/18), Bald
Eagle (7/5), Merlin (3/3), Peregrine Falcon (5/5), Barred Owl
(6/5), Common Raven (7/3), White-crowned Sparrow (6/1),
Purple Finch (12/9)

30-year low counts (3): Green-winged Teal - American (2/1),
American Crow (72/70), American Tree Sparrow (23/11)

New species (0)

Rarities (5): Greater White-fronted Goose CW (3X), Redhead
(6X), Common Eider (3X), Razorbill CW (4X), Pine Siskin (4X)

Other noteworthy species (2): Northern Goshawk (7X),
White-crowned Sparrow (8X)

30-year total = 182 count day species + 2 count week species
(Sandhill Crane, Seaside Sparrow)

Westport CBC (December 16, 2018)

**Compilers: Mardi Dickinson & Townsend Dickinson
(Connecticut Audubon Society Birdcraft Sanctuary)**

10,489 total individuals, 112 count day species + 5 count
week species (Cackling Goose, Barrow's Goldeneye, Yellow-
crowned Night-Heron, Long-eared Owl, Brown Creeper)

32 field observers + 0 feeder watchers = 32 total observers

65.00 total party hours & 305.10 total party miles

30-year high counts (6): Redhead (3/3), Common Eider (4/1),
Black Scoter (18/12), Hooded Merganser (235/234), Merlin
(4/3), Peregrine Falcon (6/5)

SPECIES	NORTHERN COUNTS										MID-STATE COUNTS										COASTAL COUNTS										STATE TOTAL
	BA	BR	BK	BW	EA	HA	LH	LS	ST	CT	CO	PA	QV	SR	WR	CL	GS	NA	NH	NL	OL	SM	WE	STATE TOTAL							
	12/22/2018	12/29/2018	12/30/2018	12/30/2018	12/16/2018	12/16/2018	12/30/2018	12/15/2018	1/1/19	1/1/19	12/16/18	12/16/18	12/15/18	12/15/18	12/15/18	12/22/18	12/16/18	12/22/18	12/15/18	12/29/18	12/30/18	12/22/18	12/16/18	STATE TOTAL							
American Owl																															
Black-bellied Plover																															
Kinglet																															
Red-shouldered Hawk																															
Red-tailed Hawk																															
Red-shouldered Hawk																															
Golden Eagle																															
Northern Harrier																															
Sharp-shinned Hawk																															
Coeper's Hawk																															
Northern Goshawk																															
Accipiter sp.																															
Red-tailed Hawk																															
Red-tailed Hawk																															
Buteo sp.																															
Eastern Screech-Owl																															
Great Horned Owl																															
Barred Owl																															
Long-eared Owl																															
Short-eared Owl																															
Great Horned Owl																															
Barred Nighthawk																															

Red-bellied Woodpecker	27	34	25	132	44	45	57	34	69	35	35	88	4	99	29	8	10	10	52	66	39	28	1022
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	2	40	3	7	2	4	2	6	4	4	11	4	5	8	5	10	10	10	4	4	3	76
Downy Woodpecker	48	45	3	19	12	12	36	7	23	13	7	26	13	18	10	10	10	10	10	4	4	3	199
Red-bellied Woodpecker	3	15	8	33	12	12	36	7	23	13	7	26	13	18	10	10	10	10	10	4	4	3	284
Red-bellied Woodpecker	2	14	14	63	7	7	26	3	10	26	25	36	1	18	14	14	14	14	14	7	7	7	393
Pileated Woodpecker	5	8	2	6	10	4	13	1	14	2	1	23	1	1	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	2	113
American Osprey																							10
Merlin																							10
Peregrine Falcon																							27
Sharp-shinned Hawk																							44
Black Phoebe																							74
Eastern Phoebe																							4
Blue Jay																							2
American Crow	82	201	35	491	113	115	115	115	167	181	54	220	31	432	144	486	149	207	104	97	32	3504	
Fish Crow	259	672	42	17	570	246	222	168	418	234	100	553	7	138	154	630	282	165	70	74	4	23974	
Common Raven	25	10	2	5	8	14	6	9	23	12	6	23	2	9	5	22	2	4	18	18	4	786	
Blue Jay	698	399	177	333	861	286	515	140	558	159	270	391	35	317	701	351	654	321	47	47	3	1592	
Black-capped Chickadee	38	45	10	20	27	20	27	20	34	35	24	36	2	24	25	25	25	25	2	2	2	726	
Red-bellied Woodpecker	5	2	10	3	7	5	7	3	10	2	3	10	1	4	35	10	8	5	4	4	4	108	
White-breasted Nuthatch	87	87	73	140	96	54	130	63	114	49	107	9	9	97	93	144	141	137	33	33	31	1779	
Brown Creeper	3	4	3	18	2	3	3	3	3	3	4	5	1	4	4	4	4	4	7	7	7	93	
Winter Wren	4	1	2	4	3	1	3	2	6	3	2	10	15	12	12	9	7	2	5	5	12	3	
Marsh Wren	11	22	22	62	10	2	59	23	74	31	48	0	13	58	100	177	157	73	46	27	10	13	
Golden-crowned Kinglet	7	9	7	4	1	1	2	29	6	5	1	9	1	1	15	7	7	2	4	4	8	151	
Eastern Bluebird	119	43	56	25	65	29	129	34	72	40	78	141	5	21	43	32	88	76	4	4	4	1141	
Hermit Thrush	1	1	2	2	2	1	5	4	3	5	4	19	1	6	26	3	13	6	2	2	3	105	
American Robin	366	97	82	388	442	166	75	96	66	197	5	5	1	1140	187	265	449	239	214	250	3	5040	
Gray Catbird																						126	
Brown Thrasher	4	11	7	48	1	5	12	7	12	18	2	16	3	30	71	3	79	41	22	42	19	480	
Northern Mockingbird	2169	1172	294	323	1212	2785	2693	823	1727	915	319	1879	227	1695	1430	3913	3304	1094	3116	625	445	3485	
European Starling	209	381	89	209	260	112	473	61	234	120	138	135	39	302	314	768	93	28	539	189	4	697	
Starling	223	63	21	3	77	4	75	207	107	6	29	123	7	88	299	137	303	124	69	81	116	1438	
Evening Grosbeak																						4	
Flores Finch																						213	
Purple Finch																						1	
Common Nighthawk																						1	
Pine Siskin	56	1	27	30	1	5	5	7	4	4	3	10	10	57	4	3	3	2	9	9	3	223	
American Goldfinch	172	116	45	335	117	44	189	165	174	164	132	346	22	180	479	191	168	94	127	349	5	3449	
Downy Woodpecker																						141	
Eastern Towhee																						22	
American Tree Sparrow	2	18	22	294	1	7	26	4	37	59	9	83	1	2	30	98	13	20	11	17	941	50	
Chipping Sparrow																						2	
Field Sparrow	3			12	1	7	1	8	1	5	20	4	3	15	12	39	8	7	5	5	143	15	
Vesper Sparrow																						5	
Savannah Sparrow																						7	
Savannah Sparrow																						125	
Field Sparrow																						4	
Song Sparrow																						109	
Lincoln's Sparrow	19	47	49	434	56	13	127	169	85	127	114	202	26	219	222	467	339	151	96	152	3114		



Bruce Finnan photo

The April arrival of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds is a much-anticipated event in April. This one visited a feeder in Southbury on April 29.

Blue-winged Teal - March 12 in Branford (PS); Yellow-billed Cuckoo - May 3 in New Haven (DA); Black-billed Cuckoo - May 4 in New Haven (DR), Common Nighthawk - May 10 in Easton (JN) and Avon (BT); Eastern Whip-poor-will - April 22 in Stonington (NB); Chimney Swift - April 18 in Windsor (PDe); Ruby-throated Hummingbird - April 15 in Southport (KV); Virginia Rail - April 4 in Durham (SBr); American Oystercatcher - March 13 in Stamford (DWi); Piping Plover - March 15 in Milford (SS); Least Sandpiper - April

15 in Madison (MK); Pectoral Sandpiper - April 14 in Madison (GH); Lesser Yellowlegs - March 11 in New Haven (MAr); Short-billed Dowitcher - April 25 in Milford (SS); Spotted Sandpiper - April 13 in New Haven (SU); Solitary Sandpiper - April 17 in Shelton (ID).

Least Bittern - April 25 in Sherman (ADi); Green Heron - April 10 in Milford (MSi); Yellow-crowned Night-Heron - March 30 in Stratford (SZ); Glossy Ibis - March 24 in Milford (MC); Broad-winged Hawk - April 13 in Wallingford (TB);

Eastern Kingbird - April 22 in Danbury (RM); Acadian Flycatcher - May 7 in Easton (FM); Least Flycatcher - April 25 in Ashford (AL); White-eyed Vireo - April 22 in Stonington (NB); Blue-headed Vireo - April 14 in Litchfield (CW); Purple Martin - April 10 in Milford (SMA) and Killingly (ABO); Tree Swallow - March 12 in Putnam (ABO); Cliff Swallow - April 11 in Norwalk (SMi); Barn Swallow - April 6 in Madison (MK); Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - April 3 in Woodbridge (JOs); Veery - April 27 in Fairfield (AK); Wood Thrush - April 23 in Orange (CL); Grasshopper Sparrow - April 26 in Suffield (PDe); Saltmarsh Sparrow - May 8 in West Haven (GH).

Bobolink - April 29 in Wilton (SMi) and Westport (EG); Eastern Meadowlark - March 16 in Westport (TG); Orchard Oriole - April 20 in Milford (TMr); Baltimore Oriole - April 20 in Durham (NM); Ovenbird - April 19 in Hamden (GS) and Darien (KW); Louisiana Waterthrush - April 6 in East Granby (JTr), Northern Waterthrush - April 14 in New Haven (SU) and Lyme (DPr); Blue-

winged Warbler - April 23 in Westport (PL); Black-and-white Warbler - April 14 at three locations; Nashville Warbler - April 19 in Milford (LO); Hooded Warbler - May 1 in New Haven (FM); American Redstart - April 25 in Wethersfield (PDe); Northern Parula - April 25 in North Granby (JW); Magnolia Warbler - April 28 in Sherman (MH), Yellow Warbler - April 19 in Greenwich (SBe); Blackburnian Warbler - April 30 in New Haven (MN); Black-throated Blue Warbler - April 23 in Westport (PL); Palm Warbler - March 31 in Litchfield (BR) and Avon (IS); Pine Warbler - March 15 in Southbury (KE); Prairie Warbler - April 14 in East Hartford (DA); Indigo Bunting - April 15 in Madison (MK).

May 2 was the big arrival day, marked by major fall-outs at East Rock Park in New Haven (20 warbler species); Racebrook Tract in Woodbridge (17 warbler species including first arrivals for Worm-eating Warbler, Cape May Warbler and Wilson's Warbler - CL, MV) and Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven, which had early arrivals of Willow Fly-



Bruce Finnan photo

This Wilson's Phalarope, seen here on May 24, was the only one reported during the spring season.

catcher and Lincoln's Sparrow (NB, JHo). First arrivals at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport, which was described as "hopping," included Red-eyed Vireo and Bay-breasted Warbler (TG). Milford Point and Greenwich Point produced first arrivals for Semipalmated Plover and Semipalmated Sandpiper (SS, CE). Milford Point got the first Least Tern (SS), and the first Common Tern was at Greenwich Point (CE). First arrivals at multiple locations included Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee and Swainson's Thrush. Other firsts included Lawrence's Warbler in Fair-

field (AK), Blackpoll Warbler in Darien (SMu) and Canada Warbler at four locations (MDi et al.).

Another noteworthy weather event was a May 5 rain storm that produced the following groundings: 37 Buffleheads and seven Red-necked Grebes at Nepaug Reservoir in New Hartford (JMe); a Bonaparte's Gull in a flooded field in Simsbury (DLA); a rare inland Yellow-crowned Night-Heron in Litchfield (NM); c. 50 Savannah Sparrows at Sikorsky Airport in Stratford (GH); and 17 Baltimore Orioles at Lake Mohegan in Fairfield (AK).

The biggest fallout numerically occurred on May 11, a classic event when a good night flight was grounded by a cold front. East Rock Park in New Haven (hereafter East Rock) swarmed with overwhelming numbers of common species such as American Redstarts, Common Yellowthroats and Black-throated Blue Warblers. Two Summer Tanagers spiced up the melee, and the action carried over into the next day. An unusually late grounding in drizzly conditions May 30 at Milford Point featured large numbers of Empidonax flycatchers and a mixture of other landbird migrants (SS).

A **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** discovered in Stratford in late February continued through April 12 (FM). A Ring-necked Duck X scaup sp. hybrid found March 6 at Seaside Park in Bridgeport may have been the same one present during winter at New Haven harbor (SMa). A **Tufted Duck X scaup sp. hybrid** was at West Haven on March 20 (NB). A male **King Eider** that wintered off New London was still present to at least May 19 (ADa). A female was present May 6-10

at Griswold Point, Old Lyme (NB). An April 15 fallout of Black Scoters produced five on Mansfield Hollow Reservoir (PR), four on the Connecticut River in Portland (TA) and two on Union Pond in Manchester (DF). A wintering **Barrow's Goldeneye** remained at Windsor Locks State Park to at least March 18 (LO). Another was at Greenwich Point March 24-28 (CE). The high count of staging Common Merganser was 1200 on April 4 at Twin Lakes in Salisbury (RBe); 650 were on Candlewood Lake in New Milford on March 14 (JD). A good count of five Red-necked Grebes was off West Haven on April 30 (FG).

A nice spring flight of 90 Common Nighthawks was at Aspetuck Reservoir in Easton on May 17 (JN). Whip-poor-wills were away from known nesting areas May 6 in Wilton (BSv), May 9 in New Milford (ADi), May 16 in Wallingford (TB) and May 19 in Westport (LM). A roost in New Haven held 3000 Chimney Swifts on May 6 (SU). The bird of the season was a **Yellow Rail** that called persistently late at night in a saltmarsh in Old Saybrook,

allowing many birders to add this most elusive of regular migrants to their state list from May 9 through at least May 25 (NB, m.ob.). A **King Rail** showed itself May 13 at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison, hereafter HBSP (RS et al.). A **Common Gallinule** was found April 28 at Wolfe Park in Monroe (MG) and one was at Station 43 in South Windsor on May 18 (MB).

A **Sandhill Crane** appeared March 21 in Norfolk, an area that has supported the species for more than a decade (JAn). Other Sandhill Crane reports came from at least five locations. An Upland Sandpiper made a migratory stop April 27 at HBSP (JCo), with two there on April 29 (JF) and another that day at Windham Airport (PR). A Dunlin was an unusual inland find on April 14 at Little Pond in Litchfield (BR). A storm dropping up to 10 inches of snow resulted in several American Woodcocks flying in the streets in Durham on March 3 (fide JMo). Three Wilson's Snipe in Storrs on April 29 were winnowing, a behavior not often observed in the the state (PR). One was at a possible

breeding location in Cornwall on May 16 (FG et al.). The season's only **Wilson's Phalarope** was at HBSP on May 22-25 (KM et al.).

The season's only **Little Gull** was at Southport Beach on April 11 (TG et al.). A **Mew (Kamchatka) Gull**, the state's fourth record of this large Asian form, was found on March 2 at Lighthouse Point in New Haven (NB). The same observer doubled down on rare gulls when he found the state's second **California Gull** on April 18 at Bradley Point in West Haven (NB et al.). It was seen periodically to at least April 28 (JHo). State-high Lesser Black-backed Gull counts were 14 on April 18 at Bradley Point (NB) and 13 on April 12 at Southport Beach 12 (JPu). A late Glaucous Gull was at Waterford on May 13 (DPe). The first report of Caspian Tern was on April 24 in West Haven (NB et al.). A Forster's Tern was at HBSP May 17 (FM). Up to four Black Skimmers ranged around western Long Island Sound from May 19 through the end of the period (MV, CL et al.). Two were as far east as Groton on May 25 (GW). On April 15 counts were made of 200



Bruce Finnan photo

A major fallout on May 2-3 produced many favorites, including this stunning male Blackburnian Warbler on May 3 at East Rock Park in New Haven.

Northern Gannets at Stratford Point (GN) and 100 at HBSP (JF). On a rainy April 21, there were 1250 Double-crested Cormorants on the move at Milford Point (JCu). An **American White Pelican** made a typically spectacular appearance April 27 in Old Saybrook (TMu et al.), then proceeded west along the coast the next day, being seen in Guilford and Southport (SMu, FM, AK et al.).

Two American Bitterns, apparently migrants, were in Middletown on April 30 (TA). Another was in Tolland on May 24 (MDa). A Least Bittern was found April 25

in Sherman (ADi) and Stratford on May 8 (SMa). The first Tricolored Heron was found April 12 at Sherwood Island State Park in Westport (TG). A Cattle Egret was in Guilford from April 22-May 23 (RS et al.), and one was inland in Bloomfield on May 28 (Jol). The first of what are now annual **White-faced Ibis** reports was at HBSP and nearby Clinton on April 20-23 (NB et al.). The next reports were from May 9 to the end of the period at HBSP (SZ, m.ob.). The April 20 discovery got birders out and looking, which produced counts of 220+ Glossy Ibis



Bruce Finnan photo

This Prothonotary Warbler at East Rock Park in New Haven may have been the most cooperative one ever recorded in the state during its stay during April 30 to May 3.

on April 21 in the Madison/Clinton area (var. obs.). One was unexpected inland and early at Windsor Locks on April 19 (PDe). A Golden Eagle was a good find March 13 in North Franklin (PR). Away from the recent breeding site in northeast Fairfield County, **Mississippi Kite** reports included one over Portland on May 18 (TA), single flyovers on May 22 at Guilford (KM), Darien (JL), Old Saybrook (NV et al.) and Westport (PL) and two on May 24 at Ecology Park in Branford (NB et al.).

Two Red-headed Woodpeck-

ers were in Old Saybrook on March 22 (JSr). Others were at Greenwich Point Park on April 28-May 4 (CE et al.); at East Rock on May 4 (m.ob.), at HBSP on May 7 (AP, MP); in Ridgefield on May 14 (NC); and at a Madison feeder May 27 (SP). Olive-sided Flycatcher reports ranged from May 14 in Barkhamsted (JHe) to June 2 in Easton (PR). Philadelphia Vireos, scarce in spring, were reported from five locations May 15-24 (TG et al.). Northern Shrikes lingered to April 5 in Durham (DS) and April 6 in Glastonbury (PR). Two Horned Larks on May 14 at

Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks were at one of the state's few breeding locations (NM). A Red-breasted Nuthatch was unexpected May 31 at Milford Point, far from any known breeding area (PDe). A bird identified as a Bicknell's Thrush by voice and appearance was reported from Lake Mohegan in Fairfield on May 17 (JPu, ABu).

Two Evening Grosbeaks were flyovers May 2 at Pachaug State Forest in Sterling (NB). Six Common Redpolls were at Coventry Lake on March 4 (GM). A

Red Crossbill was found April 7 in Norfolk, in an area with nesting potential (TG); two were flyovers May 8 in Guilford (NB) and two were at HBSP the next day (WR). The season's only **Clay-colored Sparrow** was found May 14-17 in Storrs (GM et al.). A **Yellow-headed Blackbird** was a good find April 25 in Simsbury (JG). A flock of seven Eastern Meadowlarks was a welcome find March 20 at Suffield Wildlife Management Area (PDe). A **Western Meadowlark**, found and photographed May 27 at HBSP, was first identified to species remotely when



Bruce Finnan photo

There were at least seven reports on Summer Tanagers, including this one visiting a feeder in Branford on May 16.



Bruce Finnan photo

This was one of at least two Blue Grosbeaks visiting Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison in late April and early May. It is shown here on April 25.

photos were posted on the internet (MO, MDi et al.) Three vocal male Boat-tailed Grackles arrived on March 14 at Stewart McKinney NWR in Stratford, the state's primary breeding locale for this southern species (FM). A nice flock of 110 Rusty Blackbirds was in East Granby on April 15 (PDe).

A now rare Golden-winged Warbler was found May 6 in Orange (LO). An Orange-crowned Warbler, scarce in spring, was found April 1 at Chatfield Hollow in Killingworth (RS). The season ended with singles April 29 in Wethersfield (PDe) and

April 30 in New Haven (JOs). Another in Edgewood Park, New Haven, on March 14 may have wintered (SMi). A **Prothonotary Warbler** found April 30 at East Rock was seen by dozens of observers through May 3 (SK et mult. al.). Others were in Bolton on May 4 (JF) and in Waterford on May 20 (DPe, GW). Always a good find here, Kentucky Warblers produced an unusual number of sightings: at Lake Mohegan in Fairfield April 27-28 (AK et al.); in North Madison on May 6 (MDi); and singles on May 7 in Preston (DPr) and Newtown (RB) and on May

15 in Chester (DV et al.). Most Cerulean Warblers are found at breeding sites, so migrants were noteworthy May 3 at East Rock (ES) and May 4 at Wooster Park in Stratford (FM). A **Yellow-throated Warbler** was a good early find March 1 in Middletown (SBr), but that was just the beginning. On April 19 singles were found in Fairfield (JPu) and Milford Point (NB) and one was at Bent of the River Audubon in Southbury on May 31 (KE).

Summer Tanagers were back to back May 3 at Greenwich Point (CE) and May 4 at East Rock (DWa et al.). Then there was a barrage with singles May 13 in Branford (DLo), May 14 in Darien (CE), May 16 in Westport (TE), May 18 at Bent of the River (KE) and May 24 at Lighthouse Point in New Haven (NB). A Rose-breasted Grosbeak was early April 10 at a Storrs feeder (ADe). **Blue Grosbeaks** were found on April 22 at Millstone Point in Waterford (DPr) and at HBSP (JHu et al.), where at least two were present for more than a week. Others were in Sherman on May 8 (SMa), in Enfield on May 14 (JV), in Redding on May 21 (FG) and

May 26 in Chaplin (KH).

Exotics – A European Goldfinch visited a feeder in Niantic on April 23 (TR).

Observers – Dori Ademi, Tim Antanaitis, John Anderson (JAN), Mark Aronson (MAR), Michael Aurelia (MAu), James Asmuth (JAs), Renee Baade, Bill Banks, Tom Baptist, Steve Beal (SBe), Nick Bonomo, Aaron Bourque (ABo); Alex Burdo (ABu); Steve Broker (SBr), Milan Bull, Nora Cascella, Jerry Connolly (JCo), Michael Curtis; Jeremy Cushman (JCu), Mark Danforth (MDa), Andrew Dasinger (ADa), Alex Delahanty (ADe), Paul Desjardins (PDe), Ian Devlin, Mike DiGiorgio (MDi), Angela Dimmitt (ADi), Robert Dixon, Jim Dugan, Patrick Dugan (PDu), Tony Eason, Cynthia Ehlinger, Ken Elkins, Jeff Fengler, Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe, David Funke, Frank Gallo, Mike Garwicki, Edward Grzeda, John Graham, Tina Green, Ed Haesche (EHa), Greg Hanisek, Ernest Harris (EHr), Megan Hart, Roy Harvey, Kay Hawkelee, James Heuschkel (JHe), Julian Hough (JHo), Jim Hunter (JHu), Aidan Kiley, Steve King, Micky

Komara, Dave Lawton (DLa), James Leone, Ann Lewis, Donna Lorello (DLo), Chris Loscalzo, Preston Lust, Ryan MacLean, Nicolas Main, Frank Mantlik, John Marshall (JMa); Stefan Martin (SMA), Debbie McTigue, Leslie Meredith, Jamie Meyers (JMe), Sean Milnes (SMi), Graham Montgomery, Judy Moore (JMo), Nancy Morand, Keith Mueller, Thomas Murphy (TMu), Tom Murray (TMr), Sean Murtha (SMu), Jeremy Nance, Monica Nichols, Genevieve Nuttall, Michael O'Brien, John Ogren (JOg), Jeff Olmstead (JOl), Linda Olsen, John Oshlick (JOs), Dylan Pedro (DPe) Jack Peretto (JPe); Andrea Perko, Mike Perko, Dave Provench-

er (DPr), James Purcell (JPu), Steve Pynn, Brendan Reilly, Timothy Riley, William Root, Dan Rottino, Phil Rusch, Ed Sadowski, Jannie Shapiro (JSh), James Sherwonit (JSr), Michael Simko (MSi), Russ Smiley, Paul Smith, Iain Sorrell, Steve Spector, Brian Stacy (BSt), Bruce Stevenson (BSv), George Stephens, Dan Swaka, Jory Teltser (JTe), Brian Toal, Jonathan Trouern-Trend (JTr), Severin Uebbing, Marianne Vahey, Joe Valenti, Nick Varvel, David Verhulst, Kathy Van Der Aue, Doug Warner (DWa); Mike Warner, John Weeks, Kim Westcott, Glenn Williams, Dave Winston (DWi), Chris Wood, Sara Zagorski, Jim Zipp

PHOTO CHALLENGE

By Greg Hanisek

You're searching for birds in some thickets at a time of year and in a place when most of the passerine species are streaky in browns and grays. So the color of this bird catches your eye and your imagination. Actually color is about all you have to go on, because this bird has little else in the way of field marks.

Adding to your uncertainty is the fact that few birds in North America, and especially in New England, offer green as their predominant hue. The first few that come to mind are warblers and vireos, but none of them are as plain as this bird, and besides your subject doesn't have the thin, pointy insect-eating bill of a warbler. The greenest vireos aren't plain-headed. And forget hummingbirds.

You have to turn somewhere else, and if you've got adult males on your mind, you seem to have hit a dead end. This



where attention to female and immature birds comes into play. Many beginning and more casual birders tend to concentrate on the easy males, and of course they rightly think first of species expected in their area.

So this bird presents a double quandary. It's not a common bird in our area, and the male couldn't be more spectacular and unmistakable. Adding the shape of the bill and color, you should eventually conclude this can only be a Painted Bunting of some age and sex other than adult male. You probably need more than our quiz photo to be sure about age and sex.

Having made the identification, you're doubly excited, because this is likely the first Painted Bunting you've found in Connecticut and perhaps the first one you've seen here. The species is a sporadic visitor from the South, less than annual in occurrence. The first accepted record was a female banded on Chimon I., Norwalk, on May 26, 1982. Subsequent records have been from spring and fall, with an occasional fall bird lingering into winter with the aid of feeders. Both multicolored adult males and green birds have been found.

This green Painted Bunting was photographed by A.J. Hand on Oct. 17, 2015 at Connecticut Audubon Society's H. Smith Richardson tree farm in Westport.



Photo Challenge No. 107

THE CONNECTICUT WARBLER

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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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